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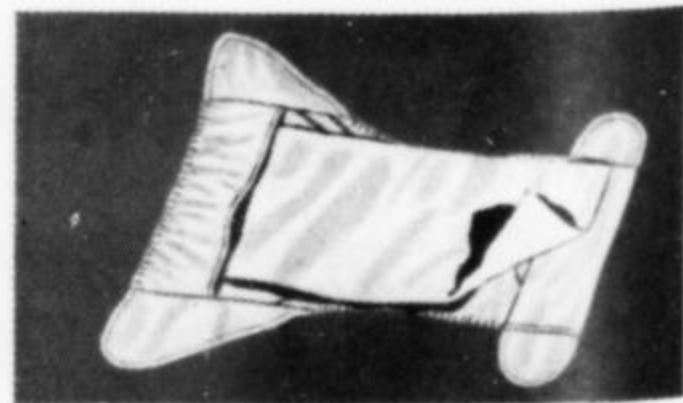
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COMMENTARY

THE ROAD AHEAD FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

The President's Report: One Year Later

JAMES A. AND NANCY F. WECHSLER

ONE year ago a presidential commission headed by General Electric's Charles E. Wilson produced a document that has no exact parallel in American history. It was entitled: *To Secure*

WHATEVER their party, men and women concerned with the protection of civil rights and the development of good inter-group relations in this country hailed the President's Report on Civil Rights as, by common consent, the most thorough and honest analysis of the problem of civil rights that any American government has been willing to present to the public. What progress has been made in implementing the report since October 1947, when it was made public; and how can one apportion credit and blame between the major parties for the successes and failures of the legislative program that grew out of it? More important, based on their record, which of the parties contesting the election can be relied upon to fight hardest and most effectively for civil rights in the four years ahead? JAMES A. WECHSLER and his wife, NANCY F. WECHSLER, here attempt a balance sheet of the past year's gains and losses, and a forecast of future possibilities. Mr. Wechsler is a member of the Washington Bureau of the *New York Post* and has been a frequent contributor to liberal periodicals. Mr. Wechsler was born in New York City in 1915 and is a graduate of Columbia University. Nancy F. Wechsler has held a number of legal positions with the federal government and served as counsel to the Committee on Civil Rights. Mrs. Wechsler was graduated from the Columbia University Law School in 1940.

These Rights. The report embodied a critical running commentary on the state of human freedom in this country and outlined a daring program for the here-and-now. Its press notices dramatized the explosive content of the survey. Southern editorial writers almost uniformly voiced anguish over the issuance of such a proclamation under White House auspices, leveling their heaviest fire against its challenge to segregation.

Elsewhere the reaction was mixed, ranging from enthusiastic approval in the Negro press to faint damns in some conservative journals. There were those who once again piously warned that "you can't legislate brotherhood." There were others who said the Committee had sounded a discordant note at a time when "slow but steady progress is being made." There were perfectionists who solemnly concluded that the authors of the report had disastrously compromised their principles in a few esoteric areas. And finally, inevitably, there were those who decided that the document was a sinister Communist enterprise foisted upon the innocent. This claim was apparently based on the proposition that any description of American frailty must have been written in Moscow—or would at least give aid and comfort to the Soviet enemy.

The tumult had many salutary results. Not the least important was the widespread

circulation which the report received in the months following its publication. It is estimated that more than one million copies have been sold or distributed in one form or another by now. And the existence of the book is at least vaguely recognized by millions who have never read the text.

YET the fact remains that in the twelve months since the Committee released its survey with President Truman's blessing, there has been pitifully little accomplished towards translating the Committee recommendations into American reality. None of the legislative proposals advanced in the report was accepted by the regular 80th Congress or the summer special session. No anti-lynching law was adopted. No permanent Fair Employment Practice Committee was created. No legislative measures designed to curb discriminatory practices in elections were approved. The archaic civil-rights statutes—under which the federal government has sought to punish violators of minority rights—were not strengthened. In brief, the record of Congress has been a systematic rejection of the Committee proposals, accompanied by the sad cry—immortalized by Brooklyn baseball fans: "Wait till next year!"

The administration's performance in the same period has been characteristically complicated and inconclusive. It is perfectly clear that the fate of civil-rights legislation ultimately rested in the hands of Republican congressional leadership; there may be long and legitimate dispute, however, as to whether Mr. Truman might have staged a more impressive offensive. At many junctures the White House backfield displayed the same penchant for fumbling the ball once it reached scoring territory that it manifested in the price-control battle and other controversies during the last two years.

Mr. Truman's audacity in sponsoring the Committee cannot be questioned. The anti-Truman drive that preceded the Democratic convention was primarily touched off by the civil-rights report and the ensuing legislative recommendations the President sub-

mitted to Congress. He could not have been oblivious to this danger. One of the lasting ironies of his administration is that his renomination was most seriously jeopardized by the combination of Dixie disaffection and liberal revolt; few men have aroused such a strange combination of adversaries. Yet while the civil-rights report was undoubtedly his baby and he refused to disown it when the going became rough, the President unquestionably believed he could nurture the child without losing his community standing.

As in many other realms, Mr. Truman did not quite grasp the depth and subtlety of the problem he was dealing with. Mr. Truman seems to believe that few issues are genuinely irreconcilable, perhaps because he himself lacks a militant faith in anything. The administration's course throughout the spring suggested the belief that it could carry on the fight for civil rights and still keep almost everybody happy. This attempt reached its climax at the Democratic convention, where Senators J. Howard McGrath and Francis Myers sought to engineer a compromise, laboring long and hard to put through a civil-rights plank verbose enough to satisfy the North and innocuous enough to enable the Southerners to reconcile party principles with Dixie practice. They failed. But this alternate affirmation of high purpose and temporizing on specific issues was generally symptomatic of the White House's mood in the first half of this year. (It might be parenthetically noted that Franklin D. Roosevelt employed the same strategy on occasion, but the touch was infinitely more artful.)

IN HIS January message to Congress—less than three months after the Committee report—Mr. Truman clearly indicated that a retreat was in prospect. His recommendations were sufficiently forthright and clear-cut to provoke the wrath of the "white supremacy" bloc. Nevertheless he withheld explicit support of the Committee's recommendation for abolition of segregation in the armed forces, and in subsequent months

he remained silent while Secretary of War Kenneth Royall, a fiery Southerner, publicly and pugnaciously opposed any change in Jim Crow in the army. As the Democratic convention neared, Mr. Truman appeared to be wooing rebellious Dixiecrats with shameless ardor. Representative John Rankin of Mississippi, whose prejudices are non-sectional, visited the White House and emerged to pronounce a generous tribute to the little man inside. In the immediate aftermath of the civil-rights report, Attorney General Clark had promised enlargement of the civil-rights section of the Department of Justice, in line with the Committee's recommendations. But as Southern fury mounted, Clark abandoned this project, dropped any effort to streamline enforcement machinery, and quietly divorced himself from a planned campaign to rally public support for the civil-rights program.

This trend was abruptly reversed after the Democratic convention. There the liberal insurgents blocked the attempt to soft-pedal the civil-rights issue and forced through a campaign plank more affirmative and sweeping than any before written on this subject. Soon afterward, Mr. Truman resumed a fighting posture. He issued two executive orders (heralded many months before in his message to Congress) establishing an FEPC for government employees and creating a committee to work out a formula for eliminating discrimination in the armed forces. It is not yet clear whether this committee will view segregation as the ultimate form of discrimination, or whether it will seek to evade this crucial point. But the administration's fluctuating emotional curve within the past year is plainly suggested by this series of developments. It is argued by some of Mr. Truman's adherents that his timidity in the pre-convention months was simple political footwork: that he planned all along to revive the crusade as soon as the nomination was safely won. Others doubt that Mr. Truman is capable of such careful political design.

Despite the many zig-zags in his course, the President has plainly entered the cam-

paign on the side of civil rights. In fact many observers believe that the support he has stirred on this level in key Northern states may save him from a debacle on the Landon scale even if he falls far short of victory. He has proclaimed a program that goes far beyond any previous Democratic efforts in this line, including FDR's. He has taken genuine risks and suffered real damage; there is no accurate way of measuring, for example, the demoralization in Democratic ranks created by the Dixiecrat uprising. The furor created by the civil-rights report may indeed be remembered after Mr. Truman is politically forgotten. Unquestionably the performance of the Republican Congress has helped to enhance the President's momentary stature. His own voice has often been weak and inconsistent, but by contrast with the GOP leadership, he has exhibited intrepid statesmanship.

IT is difficult to describe the behavior of the Republican-led Congress without resorting to vulgar political mind-reading. There have been many tortuous apologies for the failure of the GOP leadership to fight for civil-rights legislation within the past year. Yet the most convincing explanation remains the simple one that Republican leaders had little passion for the program and did not believe its enactment vital to their success. They had often boasted in song and story of the emancipation they would bring when they finally recaptured control of Congress. But the new day is still around the corner.

At no point in the regular session did Senator Taft and his associates seek to bring up any of the wide variety of civil-rights reforms that might have been offered. Late in the session Taft complained that there was not enough time to break a filibuster; this did not explain why he had allowed so much time to elapse before mentioning the subject. Even more desolate, however, was the calculated impotence that the Republicans exhibited in the face of an actual filibuster at the special session. Correspondents watching the performance were

amazed at the crudity of what they saw; Taft acted like a tennis player determined to prolong a set with an inferior opponent, swatting his own drives into the net and crying "take another" when his rival double-faulted on service. Seldom has the Senate chamber witnessed so calm an exhibition when great social matters were at stake.

It still seems slightly implausible that so little was accomplished by so many. When the President's Committee submitted its report there was widespread belief that the Republican chieftains would be compelled to make some meaningful gestures before the 1948 campaign began. But the prophets did not anticipate the decisive swing toward Republican victory. In late December Henry Wallace announced that he would head an independent ticket. When the Republican Congress convened in January its nonchalance on civil rights was already apparent.

There was sound political reason for this loss of interest. Wallace's candidacy virtually insured Republican triumph in those states where the civil-rights debate might have otherwise swayed the outcome. This is not to suggest that Mr. Wallace planned it that way. He has not planned many of the things that have happened since he entered the race. But the impact of his candidacy was unmistakable. Such states as New York and California were irrevocably lost to the Democrats with the emergence of the third party, and with them went the election. Henceforth it was safe for the Republicans to follow their own preconceptions rather than engage in fierce competition on dubious battlegrounds.

This is not the whole story. No doubt the Republicans felt they had an added immunity because of the popular confusion created by divided administrative and executive rule. Some of them hinted a fear that Mr. Truman would receive undue credit if civil-rights legislation that he fathered were enacted while he was still in the White House. Others may have believed that they took themselves off the spot by politely pointing their fingers at the Southern filibusterers during the special session. But the

dominant fact was Republican self-confidence. With Wallace running, the 1948 campaign had become virtually no contest—and, to repeat, especially in those areas where the civil-rights issue counted most.

ASSUMING, as nearly everybody in this capital does, that Thomas E. Dewey will enter the White House in January, the outlook for civil-rights legislation in the next Congress remains as unpredictable as the new president. With the third party cutting down liberal senatorial and congressional candidates in many areas, the incoming legislature may be even more heavily populated with Southern Democrats and conservative Republicans than its predecessor. In that setting no spontaneous and irresistible clamor for civil-rights bills is likely to arise on Capitol Hill.

Mr. Dewey, however, will not be the creature of Congress and there may be a strong compulsion for him to act on the civil-rights front. He may make a series of commitments in this realm before he finishes his transcontinental campaign travels. He has placed heavy emphasis in the past on his relatively enlightened policies as Governor of New York. It is at least conceivable that he will sponsor some legislation in this field—and particularly laws that might accelerate the breakup of the one-party system in the South. These could plausibly include measures providing stronger federal protection of election machinery as well as anti-poll tax and anti-lynching statutes.

Speculation at this stage about the character and direction of a Dewey administration is dangerous. Perhaps the safest forecast that can be made is that Dewey will be the captive neither of principle nor of prejudice. He has never manifested any tendency to battle for lost or hazardous causes. He is the caricature of the totally political man, so obsessed with the politics of power that ideas become instruments possessing no validity outside the election game. On civil rights as on many other subjects, he has certainly betrayed no fighting convictions to date. What he does is likely to reflect cau-

tious calculation of over-all political risk. It may also be determined by the degree to which he is preoccupied with other things in the first hectic months of office. His attitudes are unmistakably civilized. Some of his best appointments have been Negroes. But his impulses are controlled and neither idealism nor sentimentality will have much bearing on his regime. His silence during the special session was an early clue to the demeanor of the incoming president.

IN THE long run the victorious insurgence on the civil-rights plank that occurred at the Democratic convention may prove more meaningful than conjecture about Dewey's program. For this upheaval suggested, among other things, that political support for civil-rights reform is not confined solely to minority groups, nor is it based exclusively on the cold arithmetic of minority votes in restricted areas. The revolt was organized and led by the neo-New Deal Americans for Democratic Action, an organization that had previously displayed greater vitality in the realm of ideas than in the politics of the precinct. It was staged in the face of the opposition of the official party leadership; on the victorious roll-call, McGrath's Rhode Island, Truman's Missouri, and Barkley's Kentucky all vainly supported the compromise plank designed to turn away Southern wrath. But for the first time dominant forces within the Democratic convention agreed that a clear-cut stand on civil rights was vital to the party's national survival. Admittedly delegations such as those of New York and California were responding to the existence of large and interested minority blocs in their home states. But the rebellion was not confined to spokesmen from these areas. On the floor it was led by men like Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota and Andrew Biemiller of Wisconsin—men from states in which there was no agitation over the civil-rights program.

The meaning of this development may be easily romanticized. A number of minor accidents strengthened the insurgents. There was the general sense of desperation that

enveloped the convention as the inevitability of Mr. Truman's nomination became apparent. The party hierarchy did not put up much more than token resistance. All these factors cannot be discounted. Nevertheless the memorable point is that the one great clash between the antiquated Democrats and a rising progressive bloc focused on the civil-rights issue. This plank became the symbol of the progressive upsurge. The revolt could not have occurred without a genuine ferment in party ranks; it was the civil-rights report which set the stage and gave the Democratic party a far more meaningful platform than any document of the Roosevelt election years.

The same events also crystallized the Dixiecrat movement. It is reasonable to assume that a turbulent period of Democratic party debate and attempted reconstruction will follow the 1948 elections. In that process the civil-rights fight is certain to be a central theme. The younger liberals aspiring to Democratic leadership will carry the civil-rights flag, and this year's convention will probably be remembered as the first skirmish of an historic battle.

All this suggests a direct relation between the fate of civil-rights reform and the emergence of a unified, purposeful liberal political structure. To those who have covered recent congressional sessions the point seems inescapable. Dewey may—or may not—offer a handout to what he regards as civil-rights constituencies. But the record of the recent national legislature reinforces the belief that there is little insistent demand for action on a national level inside the Republican party. FEPC legislation has been enacted in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut under Republican governors. These moves are not inconsequential; unquestionably, state acceptance of such institutions will make ultimate national acceptance less painful. But the exigencies of state politics—as well as the comparative enlightenment of certain state regimes—probably dictated these steps. It is equally noteworthy that no civil-rights bloc spoke out at the Republican convention,

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where a "compromise" plank was ratified without a moment of floor debate. This is especially significant in the light of the pleas from Negro leaders and others for a dramatic declaration from the party of Lincoln. Once again Republican reticence may have reflected certainty of nationwide victory. It also exposed a deep and pervasive lack of warmth for the very objectives which the GOP has so often and so ostentatiously embraced in the past.

DESPITE the liberal Democratic rebellion and widespread promotion of the issue by the Wallace third party, real questions remain as to the existing and potential political support for far-reaching civil-rights reforms. Only the most wistful souls will maintain that the thunderous voice of The People has been cynically muffled by scheming politicians. In fact, of course, the people are bitterly divided in some places and stolidly indifferent in others. It is no military secret that there are Jewish employers who do not hire Negroes, Catholics who do not hire Jews, and Negroes who boycott Jewish stores. It is equally plain that there is varying intensity of resistance to different recommendations of the civil-rights program. The Committee report was not visualized as a package to be accepted or rejected in its entirety, and progress toward the realization of its objectives is certain to be piecemeal. For reasons previously noted, the Republican leadership, if it moves at all, is likely to move far more swiftly toward enactment of an anti-poll tax statute than toward establishment of an FEPC.

What the people think about all this is subject to the most inexact kind of measurement, but there are some illuminating hints in the most recent Gallup poll. This survey reported that a majority of the populace both in and out of Dixie favors legislation outlawing the poll tax (although residents of the seven poll-tax states dissented from this trend). With regard to anti-lynching legislation, Dr. Gallup disclosed that a bare majority of Northern voters endorses such a measure; the South

opposes it by a thumping 65 to 23 per cent, with 11 per cent undecided or disinterested. On the creation of a national FEPC, the opposition was 42 per cent outside Southern territory and 68 per cent inside.

The "no" vote is undoubtedly a combination of two groups—those who are flatly hostile to the objectives set forth in the civil-rights report and those who question the timing, diplomacy, and techniques proposed. Many foes of civil-rights reform frankly avow their belief in the doctrine of "white supremacy." Others earnestly or disingenuously invoke the principles of states rights or gradualism. The tenacity with which some Northern corporation lawyers have fought FEPC under lofty moral and legal sanctions is reminiscent of their crusade against the Wagner Act, and has at least stirred up the suspicion that they are more concerned about property than principle.

But it would be self-deception to believe that all resistance to the Committee proposals masks deliberate adherence to the economic and social status quo. Real and impressive differences exist among liberals in and out of Congress. In part the debate centers on legal issues such as the constitutionality of federal anti-poll tax legislation and of some of the proposed anti-lynching bills. Paradoxically, the bill that commands widest popular appeal—abolition of state poll taxes—is the most dubious legal document in the judgment of many constitutional lawyers. The existence of this legal doubt was conceded in the report of the presidential Committee, which urged elimination of the poll tax by either federal law or constitutional amendment.

There are also serious controversies over the timing of major actions. The Truman Committee spent many hours debating whether it is more desirable to attack segregation with a single, decisive blow or to await preliminary improvement in educational levels. There was similar discussion as to whether discrimination should be simultaneously challenged in all schools or whether the initial effort should be concentrated upon colleges and universities. It

was the final judgment of the Committee that only a sharp, clear, and sweeping break with established patterns could be conscientiously advocated. But the exponents of gradualism are not necessarily spiritual brethren of the Klan, as they are sometimes depicted in liberal cartoons.

THE Gallup polls refute the picture of a solid South united in its stand against all forms of federal action. They show obvious divergences from the Southern norm. But the breach in Dixie solidarity on the legislative front is still minor and narrow, and it is overshadowed by the unanimity with which the pillars of enlightened Southern opinion—such as Hodding Carter—have delivered almost mystic defenses of the segregation system within the past year. Senators Hill and Sparkman of Alabama, who have been clearly identified with the liberal Senate block on many congressional days, have nevertheless tried to prove that they are more Dixiecrat than John Rankin on matters of racial supremacy. It may be less valuable to excoriate such conduct than to understand its deep roots in Southern soil.

There are nevertheless genuine signs that the Southern landscape is neither uniform nor unchanging. In some municipalities segregation ordinances are becoming dead-letters. One year ago the Freedom Train did not pause in Memphis because city officials refused to permit unsegregated access to the exhibit. In late August of this year Henry Wallace held an unsegregated rally at a municipal ball park with the benign protection of "Boss" Crump's police. There was total peace despite the many forecasts that it couldn't happen there. Organization of mixed trade unions and large-scale registration of Negro voters are proceeding; and while fiery crosses have lighted up some corners of the Southern sky—most conspicuously over Georgia—more than five hundred thousand Negroes may vote in the South this fall. In Virginia a Negro has been elected to public office and in other states Negro candidates are on the ballot for the first time. It was also within

the last year that the educational rulers of Arkansas agreed to seat a Negro medical student in lily-white classrooms for the first time, even while Oklahoma was stubbornly fighting a one-woman Negro "invasion" of its law school. Oklahoma remains typical and Arkansas is the pioneer, but the situation is no longer static. In the final analysis, mass enfranchisement of Southern Negroes and the break-up of the one-party system in Dixie may be more important than intra-party maneuvers on Capitol Hill.

THUS there are two perspectives from which one can view the year since the publication of *To Secure These Rights*. One is to contend that we have witnessed another classic illustration of wasted words; that, measured in tangible legislative results, the report was filed and forgotten; that we have once again substituted rhetoric for aggressive action. Yet there is a good deal of ground for a less mournful view. The fact of the Committee report remains a major fact of contemporary life. The group that produced the document was an impressive cross-section of American political, economic, and social groups. Its personnel initially suggested the likelihood of platitudinous evasion rather than impassioned challenge. On the Committee were two widely respected Southerners whose Dixie antecedents could not be questioned, two business men with Horatio Alger histories, two Negroes, two labor leaders, and a number of other citizens from varied walks of life. They finally ratified the most comprehensive and fundamentally radical program put forward by any comparable group since the turn of the century.

Release of the report precipitated a reaction which is evident throughout this autumn's political wars. It stirred a nationwide debate; and if the debaters were sometimes more attentive than the audience, the problem was unquestionably placed before the country more insistently than ever before. The report's warning against hysteria in carrying out the loyalty program was one of the sanest pronouncements from a respect-

able source heard throughout the year. It probably contributed to the self-restraint displayed by the administration (in contrast to the Congress) in the conduct of the federal loyalty check.

In any balance-sheet, the controversy provoked by the civil-rights report must be recorded as a notable advance. There has been more thinking and discussion about the gap between American preachment and prejudice than ever before. Arthur Krock of the *New York Times* has contended that all this is a serious setback for right-thinking people because it has intensified division; but his premise is that enlightenment was quietly triumphing until the issues were sharply raised. The tempo of progress was apparently more satisfying to Mr. Krock than to a lot of Americans who are the victims of discriminatory patterns. One of the bases of a democratic society is that the conflict between those seeking swift reform and those defending things as they are will be fought out in public debate. The Dixiecrat uproar may have unpleasant political consequences for Mr. Truman this year. It may produce many angry words. For the first time, however, the frozen one-party structure of the South is thawing out and the chance of an ultimate realignment that makes sense can be glimpsed. This seems far more promising than survival of the fiction that John Rankin and Philip Murray are political brothers under the skin.

What happens next may be subject to many of the vagaries of national politics. The economic climate of the coming months, however, will be no less decisive. Without accepting a simplistic analysis of the economic origins of man's inhumanity, the far-reaching consequences of a business collapse can be easily foreseen. Civil rights will be a first casualty. If men are once again reduced to a jungle struggle for jobs, neither

the report of the President's Committee nor any similar treatise will be a bestseller. The point is too obvious to be labored and too crucial to be forgotten.

WHATEVER the economic form-sheets portend, there is no formula for swift and tranquil resolution of the social problems that now touch the consciousness of millions of Americans. In the aftermath of World War II it became apparent that segregated war memorials and pre-war Jim Crow patterns would not be submissively accepted as the fruits of democratic victory. These resentments have deepened. In a world-wide war against Nazism the survival of racism in America undercut our propaganda and caricatured our liberations. The anomaly is no less devastating in an era of new political conflict between democratic and totalitarian symbols—especially since the contemporary commissars officially reject the racism which the brown-shirts proclaimed. Even the most able Southern sophists find difficult their position of arguing that violations of human dignity are a matter of profound American concern in Eastern Europe but in Dixie are "a private affair." Their moral case is as impressive as Wallace's inference that we have no justification for "meddling" in Eastern Europe because a poll tax survives in Mississippi.

This double standard has disturbed many Southern and Northern consciences; and in a world in which the self-described Anglo-Saxons are a fraction of humanity, the strategic as well as moral consequences of segregation become a painful theme for American contemplation. In the political debates of the coming decade this public disparity between our world role and our Jim Crow playgrounds may be the most powerful weapon of psychological warfare against the folklore of white supremacy.

WHAT NEXT FOR THE ARAB LEAGUE?

No Further War in Palestine, If . . .

JOHN MARLOWE

CAIRO

AT THIS writing there appears to be little danger of the renewal of large-scale fighting in Palestine during the next few weeks. But it would be a mistake to suppose that the present state of armed truce, which, directly and indirectly, costs the combatants almost as much as actual war, can be prolonged indefinitely.

At this juncture, what is the likely course of the Arab states? First a brief review of the march of events since May 15, when the British mandate came to an end. By the beginning of May it had become apparent that King Abdullah of Transjordan was only waiting for the British departure to invade Palestine. The collapse of the Palestine Arab resistance movement had utterly discredited the ex-Mufti and any other Palestine Arab leaders who might have disputed Abdullah's claim to be the champion of Arab Palestine. Geographically and militarily, Transjordan's British-trained-and-

equipped Arab Legion was the best situated of the Arab armies for the Palestine invasion. Diplomatically, Abdullah's venture, which he regarded as a first step towards the attainment of his dream of a Greater Syria under Hashemite rule, had the support of the British government.

The other Arab states were not prepared to leave the invasion of Palestine to Abdullah, since a successful occupation of Palestine by Transjordan would have completely altered the delicate balance of power within the Arab League. Moreover, the other Arab leaders distrusted Abdullah in his attitude towards both the British and the Zionists, believing him capable of making a deal with either at the expense of the Arab League.

In these circumstances, the end of the British mandate was followed by an impressive display of Arab unity in action when Transjordanian, Egyptian, Syrian, Lebanese, and Iraqi forces marched simultaneously into Palestine. A notable absentee from this embattled array was Abdul Aziz ibn Saud, who had also been very careful not to join in the confident prognostications of victory of the other Arab leaders.

The three weeks of fighting before the first truce nevertheless disposed of any possibility of a quick military decision. There was a real danger that a war by proxy might develop in Palestine between Great Britain, which was openly supporting the Arabs, and the United States, which after swerving away from partition recognized the Israeli state five minutes after its birth. This, combined with the growing certainty that the Arab states were not capable of the anticipated victory, caused the British government to revise its views sufficiently to put pressure on the Arabs to accept the UN truce

WILL the Arab states choose the path of war in Palestine—or will they move toward a settlement? There is hardly a question of international politics about which there is more speculation—and less reliable first-hand information. In large part, JOHN MARLOWE suggests here, the answer to this question of peace-or-war depends upon the wisdom—or lack of it—that will be displayed in coming months by the governments of England, the United States, and Israel. John Marlowe is the pen name of a British writer who has a long acquaintance with the Near East, and whose previous writings have won him a wide reputation for accuracy of observation and acute judgment. His article "How Deal With Arab Nationalism?"—in which he argued the soundness and necessity of the partition plan and predicted that the Zionist forces would be more than able to hold their own—appeared in the April COMMENTARY. He is the author of *Rebellion in Palestine* (London, 1946).

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proposals. Nobody was deceived by Arab protests to the effect that the UN's intervention had robbed the Arabs of a triumph of arms.

During the truce the Arab states were mainly employed in staging a series of demonstrations of political solidarity. This had become necessary since it was already abundantly clear that the battle of Palestine would be won or lost not on the fields of the Holy Land but in the Council chamber at Lake Success. The main objects of these demonstrations were (a) to try to align Saudi Arabia more definitely with the rest of the Arab states in relation to Palestine; and (b) to try to impress Great Britain and the United States with the possibility of oil sanctions against them. With these objects in view, King Abdullah paid a state visit to King ibn Saud in an attempt to show that the long-standing feud between Hashemite and Saudite was at an end and that the two houses were united in a common determination to vindicate the policy of the Arab League.

Ibn Saud, however, was very careful not to commit himself on the subject of oil, and, apart from a few "token" troops which were attached to the Egyptian Army, made no move to reinforce the Arab front in Palestine from his own forces.

Since neither Great Britain nor the United States was prepared to enforce Count Bernadotte's partition scheme or any other solution—in this respect the position remained the same as it had been since the summer of 1945, when Great Britain had first invited American cooperation in the settlement of the Palestine problem—fighting was resumed on July 8 at the end of the month's truce. Shortage of arms and ammunition on both sides effectively limited the scope of the fighting. The Arab armies, which had been unnecessarily prodigal in their use of ammunition, were probably even shorter than the Zionists, and such fighting as followed went all in favor of the Zionists. In these circumstances, the Arabs needed little persuasion from Great Britain to agree to a renewal of the truce.

AS MATTERS stand today, the following probably represents a fair summary of the chief factors that the Arabs must take into account as they contemplate a settlement:

(1) The State of Israel has come to stay. The Arab states are unlikely to be able to deploy any greater military resources than those which have so far failed to overcome Israel. No other state or combination of states is likely to assist the Arabs to do what they are unable to do for themselves.

(2) Ibn Saud, who is not deeply committed to the Palestine struggle, is probably not ill pleased at the spectacle of King Abdullah burning his fingers, and is not likely to assist him in pulling his chestnuts out of the fire.

(3) The opposition in Egypt, which refrained from embarrassing the government during the first few weeks of the war, is again becoming clamorous, alleging, *inter alia*, that the government has mishandled the Palestine question, and allowed itself to become much too deeply committed without sufficient resources to sustain its commitments.

(4) King Abdullah, who is far more deeply committed over Palestine than any other Arab leader, is clear-sighted enough to realize his own military limitations and those of his allies on the one hand, and the strength of the Zionists on the other. He also knows that some at least of his Arab allies would be by no means averse to using the Palestine episode as a means of weakening Transjordan's influence in the Arab League.

As for the British government, it may be depended on to continue its diplomatic rear-guard action on behalf of the Arabs, scoring as many debating points as possible, in the hope that the inner conflicts at work within the Arab League, combined with such moderating influences as may be brought to bear on Israel and its American supporters, may eventually narrow the gap between the two sides sufficiently to enable the imposition of a solution which would not be violently resisted by either.

Those who have been exasperated by the British government's Palestine policy over the last ten years may be inclined to under-rate the statesmanship of a "wait and see" policy which, in the last resort with the veto up their sleeves, the British are in a position to impose upon the UN. (They have so far had no difficulty in managing the UN without the use of the veto; it is not the UN but the Arabs themselves who have made nonsense of British policy in Palestine.)

Since 1937 the British government has consistently held undesirable the enforcement of partition (or of any other solution requiring force) either by Great Britain alone or by the UN, declaring that such action would not only leave a permanent legacy of bitterness in the Arab states but would also involve the application of more force than any of the powers concerned would be prepared jointly or singly to provide. As an alternative to partition the British government deliberately left the Arabs and Zionists to fight it out between themselves in the belief that the Arab armies would be sufficiently successful to ensure American and Zionist acquiescence in some such settlement as the one adumbrated by King Abdullah, under which the Zionists would "enjoy" local self-government within the boundaries of an Arab Palestine.

Having seriously miscalculated the relative strength of the Arabs and Zionists, the British government did not make the mistake either of continuing to assist the Arab states to accomplish what they had been unable to accomplish with such aid as had already been given to them, or of stiffening Zionist demands by a sudden cessation of all diplomatic support to the Arabs. Neither of these moves would, at the present stage, have contributed to a peaceful settlement. Instead the British government proceeded to create a diplomatic smoke-screen with the object of giving the Arab states time to adjust themselves to the new scale of realities brought into being by the events of May-July 1948.

Much depends on the British government's ability to choose the correct psychological moment for the recognition of Israel. They have to wait long enough to insure that such recognition will act as a lead to the Arab states; if they recognize Israel too soon, the Arab states, whose peoples are still keyed up to a dangerous pitch of emotion on the subject of Palestine, will react with an outburst of xenophobia, disguised as "Arab unity," which will be impervious to any sense of reality or to any gleam of reason. On the other hand, they have to recognize Israel soon enough to retain some measure of control over events in the Middle East and to avoid being placed in the position of formally acquiescing in a fait accompli brought about in opposition to their wishes. Failure to recognize the psychological moment would make nonsense of Great Britain's elaborate efforts to keep the Arab states harnessed to the vital requirements of Anglo-American world policy.

THERE is a reasonable possibility that British policy will end by justifying itself. But there are a great many "ifs." First and foremost, it is necessary that Russia should continue her present impeccable policy of non-interference. Second, it is necessary that the provisional government of Israel should keep the wild men of the Irgun and other terrorist groups under control.* Third, it is necessary that King Abdullah should become sufficiently detached from the Arab League to be able eventually to follow the British lead and seek an accommodation with Israel.

The first "if" is quite unpredictable. The second is dependent both on the extent to which American public opinion is able and willing to suppress the activities of Irgun supporters in the United States and on the extent to which the provisional government of Israel can be made to realize that the existence of the terrorists is the greatest single barrier to British recognition of and

*This article was written before the assassination of Count Bernadotte—ED.

eventual Arab acquiescence in the existence of a Jewish state.

During the British occupation the Jewish Agency consistently refused to assist the British administration in the suppression of the Irgun on the grounds (a) that its existence was a direct result of the unreasonableness of British policy, and (b) that it was impossible to cooperate with the British in its suppression and at the same time to retain the confidence of the Yishuv, where public opinion was moving toward the belief that terrorist methods were "the only thing that the British could understand." But the Executive of the Jewish Agency, now that it has become the provisional government of Israel, can no longer evade its responsibility for dealing with Irgun. However, the Irgun are doughty fighters and, so long as there is a prospect of the resumption of war, it is understandably difficult for the provisional government to weaken itself militarily by any drastic action against them. But Irgun is an unmitigated political liability. A decision to suppress Irgun undoubtedly involves a risk, possibly a very grave risk, of civil war and consequent military weakness in face of the Arab armies. But it is a risk that must be taken, and taken soon. In all national and revolutionary movements there comes a time when it becomes necessary to eliminate that element (usually very valuable in the early days of struggle) which regards fighting as an end in itself and not as a means to a peaceful end. Here, too, ultimate success depends on the timing and resolution of the process of elimination.

The rulers of Israel might well ponder the example of one of their opponents, Abdul Aziz ibn Saud, whose courageous elimination of his "Ikhwan" changed him from a desert chieftain into a responsible sovereign.

The third "if" is dependent on keeping the Palestine question at a sufficiently low temperature to enable the processes of dissolution at work within the Arab League to proceed without interruption.

UP TO a few weeks before the outbreak of war in Palestine, King Abdullah was definitely the "bad boy" of the Arab League. His Greater Syria ambitions made him equally unpopular in Riyadh, in Damascus, in Cairo, and in Beirut. He was at loggerheads with the ex-Mufti of Jerusalem who, before the collapse of the Palestine Arab resistance movement, was still influential in Arab League circles. He was regarded as a British puppet, and the Transjordan treaty with Great Britain was severely criticized as being contrary to the principles of the Arab League. He was considered quite capable of betraying the Arab cause to the Zionists in return for an accession of territory in Arab Palestine. Even his traditional dynastic friendship with Iraq had been shaken by the Iraqi Parliament's rejection of the Treaty of Portsmouth. But, after the collapse of the Palestine Arab resistance movement, it was realized that effective action in Palestine necessitated a temporary acceptance of Abdullah's leadership. The Transjordan Arab Legion was the most effective armed force at the disposal of the Arab League. The prospect of British support for the Arab cause was mainly dependent on Abdullah's leadership of the invasion. And so Abdullah was promoted from the bottom of the class to the top. The reluctance with which he was promoted is today reflected in the extent to which he is now being blamed for Arab military and diplomatic failure.

It is significant that the complaint accompanying the first truce to the effect that the UN had stepped in to avert an Arab victory are conspicuously absent from Arab comment on the second truce. Disappointment at the results of the invasion, long since secretly felt, is now being openly expressed. Although the blame is still being put on the mediating efforts of the UN, it is realized that the UN's attitude would have been very different if the Arabs had been militarily successful. The UN, like the Almighty, helps those who help themselves.

The Arab states are also beginning once

more to contemplate their domestic affairs. Their mood is not unlike that of Great Britain and France at the end of 1935 when the ineffectiveness of partial sanctions against Italy had become apparent, and they faced the alternatives of imposing oil sanctions or of making nonsense of the League. But, as in the case of Great Britain and France on that occasion, no sudden volte-face can be expected. Any premature conciliatory move by an Arab statesman would be immediately repudiated both by his political opponents and by public opinion. Recognition of the inevitable is like a recovery from a dangerous illness: it is a slow process, during which quiet is essential; any sudden disturbance may cause a relapse.

Yet undeniably, the pressure of hard facts is beginning to operate in favor of a progressive disengagement from Palestine. The continuing expenses of the armed truce are heavy, and the maintenance of the Arab refugees from Palestine is also a considerable additional burden on states which are mostly poor and which all have indigenous problems of destitution to deal with. Parliamentary oppositions are becoming restless and critical. Tales of military glory are wearing thin. A policy that has proved so unrewarding cannot be pursued indefinitely, and the Arab states are beginning to realize that diplomatic success is unlikely to redeem military failure. Ultimately they will either have to increase their military resources or to accept their losses. There can be little doubt which of these two courses will finally be taken.

HOWEVER, a sullen and precarious peace, purchased at the cost of the economic exhaustion of both sides, is going to serve neither the ends of Anglo-American policy, nor those of world peace. A satisfactory settlement is one that can be accepted, possibly with reluctance but without lasting bitterness, by men of good will on both sides. The vital Anglo-American interest in such a settlement is too obvious to need underlining. Briefly, it is necessary to insure that Palestine does not become another

Macedonia leading to the Balkanization of the Middle East, with all its funereal consequences.

More immediately and specifically, it is necessary (a) to resettle the Arab refugees in their homes; (b) to resume the flow of oil from Iraq to Haifa, since this oil is an essential element in the ERP program; (c) to prevent both Israel and the Arab states from becoming financial derelicts as a result of prolonged war and economic dislocation; (d) to release the creative potentialities of the Zionist state for work towards the economic rehabilitation of the Middle East; (e) to remove a standing invitation to Russian interference in the Middle East; and (f) to eliminate a potentially serious source of Anglo-American discord.

The Arab refugee problem has serious implications. Their return to their homes can only take place as part of a general settlement of the whole Palestine question, since Israel cannot be expected to readmit a large potential fifth column into its territory so long as there is a risk of more fighting. On the other hand, neither the Arab states nor the UN can be expected to acquiesce in any Zionist refusal to readmit the refugees to their territory as part of a general settlement.

The responsibility for achieving a satisfactory settlement still lies, willy-nilly, with Great Britain and the United States. Mistakes have been made which must not be perpetuated. Personal predilections have influenced policy. Indignation has overruled judgment. Since neither Arabs nor Zionists can be expected to take a long or a calm view, it is all the more necessary that the Foreign Office and the State Department should do so. To use the Palestine problem for vote-catching, either in Great Britain or in the United States, is to discredit democracy.

At the same time, any sudden access of impartiality on the part of either Great Britain or the United States—of a kind which, if practiced earlier, might have avoided most of the present trouble—would now do more harm than good in that it

would inflame the heightened susceptibilities of their respective proteges. There must be the closest consultation between the British and the American governments, each agreeing with the other on the exact bias and on the exact timing of their respective policies. Matters must not be hurried, but neither can they be too long delayed. It is encouraging that neither the British nor the American governments have, during the last few weeks, made any definite move in the wrong direction.

AT THE time of writing, it appears likely that the question of the Arab refugees is about to become a major factor in the international implications of the Palestine problem. This question can either assist towards or militate against a settlement of the whole dispute, according to the way in which it is treated. It may either inflame Arab opinion against Zionism and against Jews generally to a dangerous pitch of intensity or it may help to induce in the Arab states a desire to arrive at a peaceful solution. Israel would do well to avoid making the refugee question a matter of bargaining, and to remember Gladstone's dictum that what is morally wrong can never be politically right. The British government would do well to appreciate the military difficulties of resettling the refugees except as part of a general peace settlement. The Arab states would do well to avoid the temptation of using the refugee question to excite popular anti-Zionist feeling. The United States government would do well to urge upon Israel the necessity for conciliatory behavior. One of the lessons of history is that there are few things more destructive of world peace than humanitarianism prostituted to political opportunism.

The Arab states, in dealing with the refugee problem, find themselves in this dilemma. They are unable, by defeating the Zionists in war, forcibly to insist on a resettlement of the Arab refugees. And they are unwilling, by direct negotiation with the Zionists, to try and arrange for their return as part of a general settlement of the Pales-

tine question. It is obvious that the UN will be unprepared, and in fact unable, to persuade the Zionists to a settlement which would include the return of the refugees without at the same time recognizing and supporting the existence of the Zionist state. Arab activity over the refugee question has therefore been mainly confined to seconding the UN mediator's efforts to obtain international assistance for the relief of the refugees. It is to be hoped that this relief will be forthcoming in generous measure, not only for the sake of the wretched refugees themselves, but also in order to enable Arab leaders to continue adjusting themselves to realities about Palestine without being harried by a revival of popular nationalist sentiment.

MEANWHILE the inescapable alternatives of total mobilization for war on the one hand and the recognition of Israel on the other are beginning to impress themselves on the minds of Arab leaders. The Arab war effort has so far not been sufficiently expensive either in money, materials, or men seriously to affect the economy of the Arab countries. But signs of strain are already beginning to make themselves felt.

The Iraqi finance minister has already drawn public attention to the disastrous effect of the stoppage of oil exports* on the country's revenue. The resultant mitigation of Iraqi chauvinism, which had been so apparent since the abortive treaty of Portsmouth, has been signalized by a rapprochement with Transjordan; this rapprochement has been officially expressed in terms of plans

*This temporary loss of the revenue from royalties on crude oil produced by the IPC and pumped down the Haifa pipeline, and which cannot be exported through any other channel, is a factor that will operate with increasing force on the policy of the Iraqi. Now that the military occupation of Haifa by the Arabs has ceased to be a practical possibility, the Iraqi government is unlikely indefinitely to sacrifice its principal source of revenue in the cause of Arab unity. Properly handled, the prospect of resuming oil exports through Haifa should go a long way towards narrowing the gap between Arabs and Zionists, especially since the prospective revenue from the oil refinery at Haifa is equally important for Israel.

for a combined general staff. Its real significance, however, probably consists in the conversion of the Iraqi government to Abdullah's views about the desirability of a compromise settlement in Palestine. The precarious finances of Lebanon are similarly affected by the cost of maintaining the influx of refugees from Galilee.

Egypt, which is financially the best able of the Arab countries to bear the burdens imposed upon her by the war, would like to liquidate her interest in Palestine in return for an accession of territory in southern Palestine, and to turn her attention to ambitions which might possibly prove more rewarding, and certainly less expensive, in the Sudan and North Africa. Ibn Saud, who has no intention of foregoing the revenue he derives from American oil interests, is using his momentarily improved relations with King Abdullah discreetly to encourage him in his moderate courses.

Only Syria, which has contributed less than any other Arab country to the war, and is less burdened with Arab refugees than any other Arab country adjacent to Palestine, remains obstinately chauvinistic. The politics of the national bloc government in Syria are largely governed by fear and dislike of the Hashemites, who are regarded as the royalist pretenders to the Syrian republic; Syria's present attitude on Palestine derives from the knowledge that Abdullah will be the principal Arab beneficiary of any settlement embodying recognition of Israel. Damascus is the Oxford of the Arab world: civilized, arrogant, and the home of lost causes.

In fact, there is no practicable alternative to a recognition of the Zionist state. Total mobilization for war by the Arab League is, at this time of day, wildly impracticable on every ground. The only practicable policy for the Arabs is to negotiate for a restriction of the boundaries of the Zionist state to the smallest possible area and to try to secure some sort of international control over Zionist immigration and military strength. The process of public recognition of this fact is inevitably slow, as we have

indicated, but any diplomatic victories which may result from prolonged intransigence will be dearly bought at the cost of increasing social, economic, and political dislocation arising from the costs of the war.

BUT if time is fighting against the Arabs, it is fighting against the Zionists too. Israel is no more able than the Arab states to support a prolonged continuance of the present armed truce. Psychologically, of course, it is easier for Israel to be conciliatory than it is for the Arab states, since for the new state it is not so much a matter of surrendering claims as of modifying demands.

The Israeli provisional government has already offered direct negotiations with the Arab states. But this expressed willingness to negotiate has been nullified by extremely provocative statements of Zionist claims put forward by Israeli representatives both in Tel Aviv and at Lake Success. As has unfortunately been too often the case with them whenever they have been in a favorable position, the Zionists have been overplaying their hand. Their claim to the inclusion of Jerusalem in the Zionist state, which would mean driving a deep salient into purely Arab territory, is unlikely to command support from any non-Zionist, if only for the reason that it would constitute a permanent future source of friction reminiscent of the Polish corridor. And a great diplomatic opportunity was missed when the Israeli provisional government neglected to guarantee resettlement of the Arab refugees in their original homes in return for a settlement embodying recognition of the Zionist state within boundaries not less favorable than, although preferably different from, the partition approved in November by the Security Council. Apart from these official gaucheries, there have of course been various irresponsible acts of violence. Presumably these may be ascribed to the Irgun, but that cannot relieve the Israeli provisional government of responsibility for the acts of citizens under its jurisdiction.

The principal effect of these Zionist ex-

travagances has been to put a premium on prolonged Arab intransigence, both by making it more difficult for Arab leaders to carry popular opinion with them in the pursuance of a more realistic, moderate policy and by raising Arab hopes of an anti-Zionist reaction among the great powers.

But, in spite of everything, the political temperature is cooling down towards a point at which Anglo-American diplomacy should be able to negotiate a settlement. Many things may occur to reverse this process, but they are all within human control, and, in particular, within Zionist control, if the Zionists are able and willing to exercise restraint.

It is an unfortunate possibility that the specific and understandable feelings of anti-Zionism that now exist in the Arab countries may broaden out into an endemic and unreasoning anti-Semitism (insofar as the term can be used in describing the feelings of one Semitic people for another) that might persist long after the achievement of a settlement in Palestine.

Such a development, apart from being a major human tragedy, would impose an additional and serious strain on relations between Israel and its Arab neighbors. It is not impossible that eventual enforced recognition of Israel should be followed by discriminatory legislation in the neighboring Arab states with the object of compelling their Jewish populations to emigrate to Is-

rael, leaving the bulk of their capital behind them. Such a move would not benefit the Arab states, but it would hardly be the first time that states with a real or an imagined grievance have cut off their noses to spite their faces.

In the circumstances the Zionists must realize that it is futile to do victory dances upon the diplomatic battlefield now, only to find themselves in two or three years appealing to world opinion against the persecution of Jews in the Arab countries.

On the whole, and by our barbaric 20th-century standards, Arab opinion towards the Jews in their midst has remained fairly calm. There has been nothing in the nature of a pogrom and for the moment there is not likely to be, unless provoked by another Deir Yassin. Generally speaking, both governments and peoples have appreciated the distinction between Jews and Zionists. However little the Zionists may at the moment wish to take account of the interests of their co-religionists domiciled in the Arab states, they would be foolish indeed to minimize the possibility of both legal and popular anti-Jewish discrimination in the Arab countries, which would inevitably endanger the prosperity and even the existence of Israel.

The extent of this possibility will be determined, in part, by the statesmanship—or lack of it—displayed by the representatives of the Israeli provisional government during the next few weeks.

THE LIBERALISM OF LOUIS D. BRANDEIS

The Father of the New Deal

SOLOMON F. BLOOM

NUMBER has always had a fascination for man. Pythagoras said all things were numbers and proceeded to reduce the world to arithmetical arrangements. Many a mystic has tried to forge a numerical key to the mystery of the universe. Quite paradoxically, a certain class of rugged men who pride themselves on their down-to-earth common sense are also subject to this high conceit. Indeed, a whole branch of liberal reform—though, I hasten to add, by no means traditional liberalism in general—has been persuaded that social problems may be solved by a kind of dead reckoning. The most notable representative of this school of thought, the English Utilitarian Jeremy Bentham, went to the length of computing happiness itself. He devised a "calculus of felicity," in which constituent joys and countervailing sorrows could be added, subtracted, and multiplied, and a reliable balance struck.

The attraction that number has for mystics shows that yielding to it is not always the mark of a superficial heart. Among reforming economists and politicians, the devotees of number have often been men particularly troubled by the fact of misery and injustice.

REFORMER, corporation lawyer, Zionist, Justice of the Supreme Court, and one of the most outstanding liberals of his generation, Louis D. Brandeis (1856-1941) lived in the center of the public stage for decades. Yet it was quite generally recognized that the particular quality of his personality and thought escaped the customary labels. It has been a continuing challenge to try to discover the hidden springs of his career, and the essential philosophy of the man many have called the father of the New Deal. SOLOMON F. BLOOM, who offers this latest appraisal, is professor of history at Brooklyn College and has been a frequent contributor to COMMENTARY. Born in Rumania in 1903, he came to this country in 1920, attended City College, and earned his doctorate at Columbia.

Louis D. Brandeis, reformer, lawyer, Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court, and one of the most influential liberals of the last generation, was such a devotee.

Brandeis' extraordinary career ranged widely and colorfully from a long and clever campaign against the financial barons, a war on monopoly and "bigness," staunch pioneering of social legislation, to outstanding contributions to the progressive movements that bear the names of Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson and might almost as justly bear his own, and finally to a climax of Zionist and judicial leadership.

But while his career has been assessed* with some adequacy, the man himself has not. He was hardly, to be sure, an easy man to know. A certain inscrutability hung about him. His enemies called it hauteur and even contempt for his fellow-men, and his friends called it reserve and insistence on privacy. Both sensed a distance. Mason observes that even those who came to know him well "discovered an inner sphere of personality vigilantly guarded, which few if any could penetrate; thinking they were close to him, they soon found as they approached the inner man they could go no further." Justice Learned Hand speaks of Brandeis' "fiery nature" but adds that for the most part the fire lay "buried beneath an iron control."

If Brandeis possessed a fundamental outlook that underlay all others he was not aware of it himself. "I have no general philosophy," he would say. "All my life I have thought only in connection with the facts that came before me. . . . We need not so much reason as to see and understand

* Alfred Lief, *Brandeis: The Personal History of an American Ideal* (New York, 1936); Jacob de Haas, *Louis D. Brandeis* (New York, 1929). These biographies have been supplemented, and in some degree supplanted by Alpheus T. Mason's *Brandeis: A Free Man's Life* (Viking, New York, 1946). This elaborate work of 700-odd pages is authorized by the late Justice.

facts and conditions." He seemed to doubt the value of a philosophy altogether. "I think reason which leaps far ahead does very little in life." Or, "sometimes it is better not to try to see the unknowable future." Style, which so frequently gives away the man, effectively concealed Brandeis. He wrote a dry, factual, and even uncouth prose stripped of all sinuosity, allusion, and penumbra. And he shut the last door of self-betrayal by avoiding discussions of philosophical or religious matters.

We may take it perhaps that Brandeis was very much a man of this world, the kind of man who, as Lief notices, spurns metaphysics. But if we cannot reach the inmost source of his drive or touch the mainspring of his character, we have at least the one clue that practical men most often leave behind them: their *modus operandi*. If we follow this clue we may strike a distinguishing characteristic, not of Brandeis alone, but of the whole school of which he was a notable figure. And in a day that cries out for a reappraisal of liberalism, it is well to refresh our view of one of its most fruitful branches.

SPEAKING culturally, Brandeis' *modus operandi* was an inheritance. His family belonged to that sizable group of middle-class immigrants who flocked to the United States from Germany and Austria a century ago and played a considerable role in the commercial upbuilding of the mid-West and the Southern borderland as well as the East. A strain of cautious economy ran through the breed. The story is told that in his high-school club, young Brandeis paid the most particular attention to the treasurer's accounts. From the beginning and throughout, he showed a high aptitude for mathematics, or, I should rather say, for practical figures. De Haas recalled that even in later life Brandeis could recite prices of staple commodities and the important stock exchange listings for decades.

This trait made itself felt in his law work. Brandeis had hesitated but briefly before rejecting the career of teaching and scholarship that his unique record at Harvard Law School suggested. "The love of a struggle and a little ambition is given [to my sons] as their maternal inheritance," wrote Adolph Brandeis, who sensed his son's turbulent energy and knew he wanted to try his "skill tilting the world." Indeed, Louis was restless and battle-hungry, and the "wrangling

of the bar" attracted him. He was passionately intent to succeed and to distinguish himself in no mean measure. And in Boston of the 80's success meant not only ample riches but the prestige that comes from an unusual public career and social influence.

The stakes were high and the costs quite inflationary. Only his keener and swifter abilities distinguished young Brandeis from the ordinary practitioner at the bar. The client always came first, and truth and justice were left to shift for themselves. I am afraid that his treatment of his juniors early in the career of his law firm in Boston was autocratic, and his sudden defense of monopoly during his triple connection with the United Shoe Machinery Company as investor, director, and counsel, was unconscionable. Brandeis insisted for a long time that *his* was a "good" monopoly. Like all men who stamp their feet in self-conscious assertion of power he was not spared the price of lapses from consistency and good taste.

Brandeis specialized in commercial and corporation practice and planned his success with the care of a strategist. He drew up "incredibly long lists of people he had met, who had introduced them to him, where he had met them, and, occasionally, what they were like." "Cultivate the society of men—particularly men of affairs," this Poor Richard advised a younger colleague. "Lose no opportunity of becoming acquainted with men, of learning to feel instinctively their motivation, of familiarizing yourself with their personal and business habits; use your abilities in making opportunities to do this. . . . Impress them with your superior knowledge." In these early years Brandeis spoke habitually as a conscious representative of capitalism. In opposing an unfair franchise for the Boston Elevated Railway Company in 1897, he remarked that it would result "in great injustice to the people of Massachusetts, and eventually great injustice to the capitalist classes whom you [the state legislators] are now representing, and with whom I, as well as you, are in close connection."

More distinctive of Brandeis was his inevitable prescience in mastering the methods and techniques of business. Louis E. Kirstein observed that he was a better businessman than most of his business clients. He mast-

ered—and this was much to his taste as well as quite original—bookkeeping and accounting. “Know bookkeeping, the universal language of business,” he counseled, echoing, in his own way, Marx’s description of that science as “the control and abstract joinder of the process of production.” Bentham, meet Hegel. . . . And, looking beyond Bentham to Turgot, Brandeis descended to the simplification: “Accountancy—that is government.”

An important practice quickly brought him the first desideratum of success. By 1907 he had amassed his first million dollars, and by 1916, when he was appointed to the highest bench in the country, he had amassed his second. He made only “absolutely safe investments intended to be permanent and yielding a low rate of return,” in the best railroad, utility, municipal, and government bonds. Imperceptibly, by the time of his death, the estate surpassed the third million.

But his consumption was conspicuously frugal. Although his income over many decades hovered around \$100,000 a year, he lived on one-tenth of it. His summer home on Cape Cod was valued at \$9,450. “Buy nothing that is not irresistibly handsome,” he advised with great good sense, and added: “Buy nothing which your grandchildren cannot use.” His puritanism was disturbed by the marble ostentation of the new Supreme Court building in Washington. Lief reports that he would tear the folded court stationery in half and use only one piece at a time. Between 1905 and 1939 he gave to Jewish charities and to Zionism more than \$600,000; another half million to friends and relations; most of his estate went to Zionism and other public causes. Yet the psychological motif of his wealth was not disbursement. “The great happiness in life,” he said, “is not to donate, but to serve.” Mason comments that “it was his time and his brains—the harder gifts—that he gave to good causes rather than his cash.”

It was hardly his fault, then, but merely the effect of a soundly budgeted independence that he died a multi-millionaire. It is to underline his conception of independence—a conception that speaks volumes for his time and place—that I have mentioned these figures. “I don’t want money or property most. I want to be free.” And he measured freedom by the highest standards available; he would be no less free than the richest. Lief happily

remarks that Brandeis wanted “a million-dollar grip on life.”

INDEED, to the type of liberalism that Brandeis represented, the most valuable treasure was not money but time, time for effort. If he invested safely it was so he would not have to “take time off thinking about it.” He counted it as his greatest luxury to be able to “invest” his “surplus effort”—so he put it, in characteristic phrasing—in public causes, without compensation. We are in the presence here of Sir Isaac Newton’s account of time as an external reality with an existence of its own, an “absolute, free, and mathematical value.” In this old psychology, time is something that we “have” and “own.” It is our greatest *calculable* treasure. The proper allocation and exploitation of time becomes the first premise of a rewarding life. Brandeis’ day “ran according to steady routine, in which hours, even minutes, were carefully scheduled,” writes Mason. “By planning, personal efficiency could be doubled or trebled. ‘Between what we do and what we are capable of doing there is a difference of 100 per cent,’ he maintained.” The whole year was scheduled: “I soon learned I could do twelve months’ work in eleven but not in twelve.” If he did not feel fit, he did not trust his judgment! We are reminded of another distinguished liberal, the British Prime Minister, William E. Gladstone, who was careful to use the minutest interstices of leisure—he always carried a classic in his pocket as insurance against the unexpected idle moment—and who promised his son that “the thrift of time” would yield him a “usury of profit.” The thrift of time, and the eye to figures, not to mention a fertile mental mechanism, brought Brandeis a large harvest. Legal briefs based on painstaking analysis of economic facts and social conditions rather than on musty legal precedent became, as everyone knows, Brandeis’ peculiar and creative contribution to his craft. On such issues, for example, as shorter hours or night work for women, which he fought before state and federal courts, he would submit a few pages of law and several hundred of the “world’s experience” with the moral, physiological, and social effects of overwork. The “experience” consisted of thousands of abstracts and summaries of in-

vestigations, factory inspectors' reports, medical treatises, and social studies in every country and in every language. The courts finally yielded, reluctantly, to his novel "argument": the United States Supreme Court declared—with what in any field but the law would be regarded as an enormity of naivety—that it would take "official cognizance of all matters of general knowledge."

In the long struggle with the then powerful New Haven Railroad and with J. P. Morgan, who tried to monopolize the rails of New England, the accountant's eye spied the enemy's Achilles' heel. It appears that the railroad's financial statement for 1907 was cast in heterodox form: the item of maintenance was omitted from the debit side and charged to profit and loss, instead of to operating expenses as sound bookkeeping required. The New Haven paid its traditional eight per cent, but had the accounts been done properly they would have shown that the profits were more than a million dollars short of the sum needed for that vainglorious dividend. Brandeis explained this in a loud voice, but the financial manipulators already knew it and the investors trusted them. A few years later the railroad was very bankrupt and the bankers who had mulcted it quite superfluously solvent. "My special field of knowledge," remarked Brandeis, "is figures."

Again, his deftest stroke in the famous Taft-Ballinger-Pinchot controversy over the conservation of natural resources was strikingly arithmetical, or rather chronometric. President Taft had dismissed a critic from the public service and cited a report by Attorney General Wickersham in justification. It escaped all eyes but Brandeis' that two dates mentioned by the President made it appear that Wickersham had turned out a report of half a million words in a week. Mason remarks coyly that "Brandeis knew only one man who could have done that job in that time, and his name was not Wickersham." By studying his movements for that week, consulting railroad time tables and newspaper accounts, Brandeis demonstrated that Wickersham could not have done it and so exposed the dismissal as political.

BRANDEIS' interest in reform developed rather slowly. His early excursions in this field were eminently respectable and

innocuous—liquor, civil service, free trade. The turn apparently began about 1890, when he married into the liberal-minded Goldmark family and reacted to the shock of the Homestead steel strike and the ruthless violence perpetrated on the workers. Certainly he showed a general restlessness. His successes in the law came ever easier; perhaps he craved fiercer contentions and worthier contenders. The age was breeding business Goliaths and swashbucklers, proud magnates who needed humbling. He plunged into combat with the strongest figures of his time.

Here, too, he showed a strong predisposition for order and reckoning. Hence his advocacy of scientific management. The problems business had created—and few men had been so effective in exposing them—business itself could mend by rationalizing itself. He took the engineer's view of business as "an intricate machine." The goddess of reason revenged itself. Everywhere else the man of common sense, Brandeis became here the high rationalist. "The distinction between the mechanic and the engineer is that the mechanic cuts and tries and works by formula based on empiricism; the engineer calculates and plans with absolute certainty of the accomplishment of the final result in accordance with his plans which are based ultimately on fundamental truths and natural science."

Brandeis aroused enormous interest in scientific management when he brought the testimony of industrial engineers before the Interstate Commerce Commission to support his contention that the railroads could save a million dollars a day by applying the methods devised by Frederick W. Taylor for time and motion studies and analysis of unit costs. The savings, incidentally, would make unnecessary the higher rates the railroads were asking for. His enthusiasm was aflame, he piled argument on argument, even pointing to the value of efficient preparation in Prussia's victory over France in 1871 and Japan's over Russia in 1904.

"Taylorism" was of course anathema to labor leaders and radicals, who saw in it only a highfalutin expression for murderous sweating and speed-up. But Brandeis insisted that "when Taylor, with infinite patience and genius, discovered the laws by which a given quantity of pig iron might be loaded

into a car . . . he was protecting his workmen, not exhausting them." The introduction of such methods offered to labor its "greatest opportunity." A more scientific organization of production would not only eliminate waste and increase profits, making possible higher wages, but would stimulate worker-management cooperation. It would raise morale by emphasizing workmanlike achievement. "Men would be led, not driven."

BRANDEIS had made a useful suggestion and betrayed a fundamental blindness. He sensed correctly that labor and radical leadership had shown too little concern with the processes of production. It is only lately that the more advanced unions have begun to study and recommend more efficient methods in their industries. Marxism itself was long guilty of the same neglect. But management and ownership, which stood closer to the controls, were much more to blame for waste and inefficiency. This Brandeis of course perceived, yet his solution implied that management would not only show a greater intelligence but might also subordinate profit-mindedness to the objective demands of scientific production. Believing anyway in "betterment within the broad lines of existing institutions," he proposed with fetching simplicity that business become a liberal profession, governed by recognized ideals and standards, like medicine, or, say, the younger calling, agronomy.

In *Business—A Profession*, a commencement oration at Brown University in 1912, Brandeis soared to the hope that business—and under that term he included manufacturing, transportation, and finance as well as merchandising—should require a preliminary intellectual training, dedicate itself to altruistic service, pool the best techniques and "secrets," and encourage excellent performance for its own sake. He assured the ambitious that this would still leave room for distinction, and for unusual returns, just as was the case in other professions. Brandeis did nothing by halves. He went on to proclaim that as the new profession developed, "the great industrial and social problems expressed in the present social unrest will one by one find solution." No wonder he remarked that "business is one of the noblest and most promising of all professions."

How ridiculous was the expectation that schools of business might help to solve the economic crisis—for that was what his suggestion boiled down to—became clear even to business economists. In introducing the second edition of *Business—A Profession*, Professor James C. Bonbright of the School of Business of Columbia University observed that between the First World War and the fateful year of 1929, such schools had increased in number, and business morality had deteriorated.

Brandeis' opposition to big business derived from a certain view of human nature and an ingrained sense of the proportion of things. "Nobody can look after a business as well as the owner, but as a business grows in size the man at the controls has a diminishing knowledge of the facts" and therefore little basis for judgment. Ability is rare and so is self-knowledge. "Few men are bad, but many are weak." If we are to cut our coat to human cloth, we must keep the unit of enterprise small. In this rather pessimistic view, Brandeis was closer to Bentham than to the French Revolutionary liberals, whose faith in humanity was sanguine and adventurous. An underlying shadow of distrust helps to explain the curious paradox that the economic liberal school, which places an extreme stress upon individual freedom in trade, industry, and society, yet implies a need for external organization or arrangement—not necessarily political—which might discipline men and protect them from their own weaknesses and passions. Brandeis put it strikingly, even if somewhat condescendingly, when he said that "it is up to us to create conditions which do not tax their character too much."

HE SAW, too, that a certain disproportion prevailed between an indefinite accumulation of wealth and the continuance of political democracy. How long would the many, who formally command sovereignty, submit to the invidiousness and the poverty that accompany "industrial despotism"? But Brandeis wanted to apply a "brake on democracy" as well as on runaway capitalism. Socialism he regarded as quite undesirable, as undesirable in fact as immoderate capitalism, of which it seemed to him the product and obverse. The excesses of one bred the vagaries of the other. He preferred voluntary

cooperation between freely associated capitalists and freely associated workmen.

Brandeis' sympathy for the underdog was based therefore not on Marxism or Veblenism, nor even on populism, but on Bentham's principle of "the greatest good for the greatest number," which proceeds from the premise of things as they are. A proper distribution of fairness could hardly leave the mass of workers to the side. Collective bargaining, to save property from its own abuses and those of socialism; the "preferential shop," in which the union is strong but nobody is *forced* to join, for "men must have industrial liberty as well as good wages"; the incorporation of unions to insure public responsibility; the renunciation of violence and sabotage to insure order and efficiency; the cooperation of labor unions with "unions" of employers in the solution of common problems, for their problems were essentially mutual—such, in brief, was Brandeis' program for a more or less automatic Utopia. Industrial despotism would be succeeded by profit sharing, then by sharing of responsibility. That seems to have been his goal.

The emphasis on voluntary cooperation made Brandeis unsympathetic to those aspects of the New Deal which led to planning and regulation from the outside. In many ways the New Deal was his own spiritual child. Closer regulation of banking, the stock exchange, and holding companies; the warmer protection of the investor; the separation of investment from deposit banking; the recognition of labor's bargaining rights; the establishment of social insurance; and the occasional forays of Franklin D. Roosevelt and his followers into the tempting field of limitation of the size, and even income, of corporate enterprise—all these flowed smoothly from Brandeis' views. The efforts at fact-finding and economic enlightenment pleased him. He had always been in favor of experimental stations and the gathering and distribution of trade information on any scale whatever: for "science," nothing was too big.

On the other hand, Brandeis did not like a government too busy, too inquisitive, and too fat with delegated powers. There was a danger that the New Deal might kill bigness in business and become itself "big" in the process. His distrust of the exaggerated scale applied to political life as well as to

economic. In this distrust Brandeis stood four-square on the tradition of liberalism.

THIS tradition he represented brilliantly on the Supreme Court, along with his older colleague Oliver Wendell Holmes, but in his own peculiar way. He would balance the power of labor and capital. Hence he defended unionization in defiance of "yellow dog" contracts imposed by employers, and of court injunctions which protected such contracts. Liberty of contract begins, as Holmes remarked, in an "equality of position between the parties" (*Hitchman Coal & Coke Co. v. Mitchell*, 1917). On the same principle, Brandeis defended the large-scale labor organization as a foil to the large-scale concentration of capital when that proved to be an accomplished fact (*Duplex Printing Co. v. Deering*, 1921). The turning of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, originally passed to prevent business monopoly, into a weapon against the activities of labor, particularly strikes, seemed to him outrageous. He told the Court, briefly, that the injunction against refusal to work reminded him of involuntary servitude (*Bedford Cut Stone v. Journeymen Cutters' Association*, 1927). For a long time Brandeis fought against the conservative Court's rejection of state legislation for minimum wages. The individual state, he argued, must be left free to deal with dependency and with that "demoralization of its citizenry and social unrest which attend destitution and denial of opportunity" (*New York Central Railroad v. Winfield*, 1917). Again together with Holmes, he devised the formula of "a clear and present danger" of an actual assault upon the state as the only justification for restraining free speech (*Schenck v. US*, 1919).

His mightiest strokes were directed against capitalist monopoly. Repeatedly he defended the right of states to limit the power of corporations. It seemed to him right that Pennsylvania should tax cab corporations, and Florida chain stores, more heavily than they did individual owners or partners (*Quaker City Cab Co. v. Pa.*, 1928; *Leggett v. Lee*, 1933). The monopolistic corporation was a modern mortmain; through sheer size it dominated not only the consumer but the citizen and the state itself; within the corporation, power was slipping into the hands

of the few manipulators at the top; the "feudal" system was back again. "The true prosperity of our past," he wrote with passion and nostalgia, "came not from big business but through the courage, the energy, and the resourcefulness of small men."

Love of order prevented Brandeis from stopping at mere unrestrained competition. When the conservative Court denounced as monopolistic the pooling of information among the members of a trade association that controlled nearly one-third of the lumber industry, and pointed to the fact that an agreement to curtail production had pushed prices up, Brandeis suddenly tacked between monopoly and knowledge.

"The cooperation which is incident to this plan does not suppress competition. On the contrary, it tends to promote all in competition which is desirable. By substituting knowledge for ignorance, rumor, guess, and suspicion, it tends also to substitute research and reasoning for gambling and piracy, without closing the door to adventure, or lessening the value of prophetic wisdom. In making such knowledge available to the smallest concern it creates among producers equality of opportunity. In making it available to purchasers and the general public, it does all that can actually be done to protect the community from extortion."

Brandeis seemed to be afraid, too, that if businesses could not combine for information they would simply consolidate into larger units. He, no less than they, was confessing that simple competition was dead. The dilemma landed him almost in the arms of Marx. During the depression of the 30's, Oklahoma attempted to prevent overproduction and the collapse of prices in the ice industry by licensing and controlling the business as though it were a public utility. It was again the turn of the conservatives to cry monopoly and state socialism. Brandeis answered that society faced new problems and must be allowed to experiment to find solutions which, evidently, he had not (*New State Ice Co. v. Liebmann*, 1932).

"Some people believe that the existing conditions threaten even the stability of the capitalistic system. Economists are searching for the causes of this disorder and are re-examining the bases of our industrial structure. Businessmen are seeking possible remedies. Most of them realize that failure

to distribute widely the profits of industry has been a prime cause of our present plight. But rightly or wrongly, many persons think that one of the major contributing causes has been unbridled competition. Increasingly, doubt is expressed whether it is economically wise, or morally right, that men should be permitted to add to the producing facilities of an industry which is already suffering from overcapacity. . . . All agree that irregularity in employment—the greatest of our evils—cannot be overcome unless production and consumption are more nearly balanced. Many insist there must be some form of economic control. . . . There must be power in the states and the nation to remold, through experimentation, our economic practices and institutions to meet changing social and economic needs. . . ."

BRANDEIS' belated conversion to Zionism presents a baffling problem. Could we but find it, the key to the essential man lies here, if anywhere. "A typical assimilationist," as Mason describes him accurately, Brandeis became a fervent Zionist at the age of fifty-six. "Several members of the Brandeis and Goldmark families had married Gentiles," and his relatives did not share his new passion. "Even Alfred Brandeis, the beloved brother, and his entire family stood aloof from the movement, as did the Goldmarks. In the Justice's own household only Susan [one of his two daughters] became a Zionist." But Brandeis always enjoyed a lonely and difficult eminence. Did his new interest stem from deep idealism? Was it the final burning of the Boston bridges? Did he sniff another unequal struggle?

He had first come in touch with the Jewish world in 1910, in the role of conciliator between the embattled employers and workers in the garment trade. "What struck me most," Brandeis said afterwards, "was that each side had a great capacity for placing themselves in the other fellow's shoes. . . . They argued, but they were willing to listen to argument. That set these people apart in my experience in labor disputes." In any case, the air was bracing. Benjamin Schlesinger, the union leader, was not slow to characterize Brandeis' preferential shop as "a union shop with honey." The dramatic Isaac Hourwich, given twenty-four hours by Brandeis to make up his mind on a vital issue,

remarked that the Czar's court-martial was in the habit of giving forty-eight. Involved in one way or another in that historic strike were the Socialist leader Morris Hillquit, the Socialist Congressman Meyer London, the Jewish leader and constitutional lawyer Louis Marshall, the banker and philanthropist Jacob Schiff, the civic and social worker Henry D. Moskowitz, the religious reformer Felix Adler—a veritable roll call of the most distinguished and powerful Jewish leaders. Here were men worth anyone's mettle.

Brandeis joined the Zionist movement in 1912, under the influence of de Haas. His Zionism seemed to be an extension of his liberalism. The liberalism whose unit was the individual had not succeeded in solving the Jewish question; a liberalism whose unit was the national group would. The transition was easy. If the individual has a right to life and freedom, why not the group? If the little fellow is entitled to the same rights as the rich and the aristocrat, why is not the little nationality entitled to the same right to an independent cultural and political life as the large nation? It remained only to show that the national group possessed that core of distinctiveness and worthwhileness which it was the aim of traditional liberalism to protect in protecting the individual. This was difficult, and still is. Brandeis said that the individuality of a people was "irrepressible," like that of a person, and let it go at that.

"The new nationalism adopted by America"—this was said in 1915, in the shadow of the European war and of America's growing interest in the national issues raised by it—"proclaims that each race or people, like each individual, has the right and duty to develop, and that only through such differentiated development will high civilization be attained." The Jews particularly have the duty to develop their character. For "what people in the world has shown a greater individuality than the Jews? Has any a nobler past? Does any possess common ideas better worth expressing? Has any marked traits worthier of development?"

TEN years earlier, Brandeis had uttered quite different views: "There is room here for men of any race, of any creed, of any condition of life, but not for Protestant-Americans, or Catholic-Americans, or Jewish-Americans, nor for German-Americans,

Irish-Americans, or Russian-Americans. This country demands that its sons and daughters whatever their race—however intense or diverse their religious connections—be politically merely American citizens. Habits of living or of thought which tend to keep alive differences of origin or to classify men according to their religious beliefs are inconsistent with the American ideal of brotherhood, and are disloyal."

But now the same ideal required that the Jew preserve his distinctive national tradition: "America's fundamental law seeks to make real the brotherhood of man. That brotherhood became the Jewish fundamental law more than twenty-five hundred years ago. America's insistent demand in the twentieth century is for social justice. That has also been the Jews' striving for ages." Now "... to be good Americans, we must be better Jews, and to be better Jews, we must become Zionists." Every Jew must stand up and be counted as a Zionist or "prove himself, wittingly or unwittingly, of the few who are against their own people."

The self-righteousness is no less evident than the inconsistency and less pardonable. But, in its context, his Zionism refracted the principle of national self-determination that the Wilson administration, with which he was always intimately associated, was promoting as one of the American stakes in the First World War. Brandeis was merely asking for the Jews what Wilson was asking for the Belgians, the Serbs, and the Czechs.

Two years after he became a Zionist the European war transferred the center of gravity of the movement to the United States. An unusual opportunity for leadership came to him. He was suddenly chosen to head the American movement and wielded a large influence until the followers of Chaim Weizmann defeated him in 1921. Thereafter he devoted himself to economic projects for the development of Palestine. His fall was a tragic event, for Zionist leadership represented apparently an attempt on his part to rise from economism to humanism. Yet his congenital approach to the world still governed. He insisted on hard work, careful investment, separation of donations from investments, economic construction rather than political propaganda, and always on sound budgeting and again sound budgeting. He said that "every person who wastes

a cent, whether it be in a cable, in a salary, or an unnecessary letter, is postponing, directly or indirectly, to perhaps a hundred times that extent, the achievement of our aim." De Haas reports that he installed time clocks in the Zionist offices, and assembled endless figures. No one who is familiar with the character and history of Zionism—and I am thinking of its faults as well as its virtues—will, under all the circumstances, be much surprised that his opponents pronounced Brandeis dead to the emotional and spiritual values of the movement. They may have felt like the Emperor of Austria to whom Richard Cobden, the famous free trader, in 1859, when Italy was demanding the province of Venetia, made the sensible and extraordinary suggestion that he sell the province for a goodly sum and balance his budget. It seems Franz Joseph was not in the real estate business, and he preferred to wage a costly war and lose Venetia. Both Cobden and Brandeis were betrayed by an overdose of common sense.

Here as elsewhere, it appears that the statesmanship of many an economic liberal was private management writ large. Cobden, who began life as a calico salesman, felt, in the words of his biographer, Sir John Morley, that "the affairs of a country or a nation come under the same laws of common sense and homely wisdom which govern the prosperity of a private concern." The statesmanship of Brandeis was much warmer and more social-minded; it was, instead, husbandry writ large. With him, economics returned to its original Greek sense of household management. The familiar familial virtues are all there. First comes duty, "which must be accepted as the dominant conception of life." Then comes work, "the best game that there is." Then follows a homely emphasis on personal effort and ingenuity. The mechanization of industry was one thing, but the mechanization of living quite another. Brandeis was repelled by gadgets and the kind of labor and time-saving devices that undermine the serious exertion and direct responsibility that for him spelled character. Over the whole, broods the conception of thrift and foresight and that anxiety which, as Thomas Hobbes observed, haunts men who are "over-provident." It is the "perpetual fear" that "always accompanies mankind in the ignorance of causes."

THE pattern of Brandeis' thought and the temper of his personality—but, alas, not his inward soul—are now, I think sufficiently clear. Having devoted himself to the external aspect of the social problem, and avoided its roots and its humanistic as distinguished from humanitarian implications, he was able to apply successfully the principles of a simple symmetry. Along with his liberal and utilitarian compeers of the last century, he helped to improve and reform a polity and a society that had been wrenched from aristocratic moorings to be cast upon a shore covered with jungle. It was only the ultimate question that these men failed to ask themselves, and that was whether a well-organized zoo is really better than a jungle. Whether we can afford to sacrifice profound though ineffable human values to seductive efficiencies is an aesthetic and moral question as much as it is an economic one, and we can blink it no longer. That is why Brandeis, gone but seven short years, already speaks to us in the muted tone of a distant age.

And yet, eventually a zoo, no matter how well organized, would not have suited Brandeis. The truth is that he was a divided man. His recognition of the need of great wealth for true independence did not square with his craving for a Spartan existence; each made the other illogical. His philosophy of scientific management and business and industrial engineering clashed with his craving for unmechanized and strenuous personal living. His mind inclined to order and his heart panted for struggle.

Brandeis resolved these paradoxes simply, as strong men do. He gave his passions to his career and his thought to his country. The career is singular and romantic, his thought an indistinguishable part of his age, almost an echo of it. The people from whom he sprang, the country in which he thrived, were absorbed by enterprise, building, exchanging, saving. His mercantile and industrious generation was alarmed by the wolf that comes down on the fold, the wastrels who toil not, neither do they spin, the crickets who laze away the summer and in the winter demand food of the ant. The answer to all these was watch, weigh, measure, count.

"Remember, O Stranger," Louis D. Brandeis exulted, "Arithmetic is the first of the sciences and the mother of safety."

THE PASSING OF DUTCH JEWRY

An Elegy

SIEGFRIED E. VAN PRAAG

AFTER a great war, some men return to their country to find its cities and towns in ruins—but the people are still there. Others return to find a terrible void—their generation has been decimated; but the life they have always known flows once again through habitual, venerable channels. Their generation is decimated—but the people are still there. And we—what have we found? The country is still there, but the people—our people—are not. History has entombed them. The human beings who peopled our infancy, our youth, the familiar talk that hummed through our ears like a well-known song, have ceased to exist. Until the end of our days we shall know the futile wish to see these people walk, act, think and react in their own peculiar manner; but they will not return.

There are still Jews in Holland. I have met them. They now constitute a community like the Jewish communities of the Scandinavian countries: no longer an integrated unit—only a collection of individuals. They still have a special psychological make-up and characteristic thoughts, but they no longer have a way of life of their own.

WHEN the Nazi flood receded from the Netherlands, it was seen that the centuries-old Jewish life of that country was all but destroyed. This moving elegy on the fate of his people is from the pen of the noted Dutch man of letters SIEGFRIED EMMANUEL VAN PRAAG. Born in Amsterdam in 1899, Mr. Van Praag studied literature and philosophy at Amsterdam University. He has published numerous books and articles, mostly on Jewish subjects, but also dealing with 18th-century France and with subjects in the field of zoology. One of his novels, *A Man of Importance*, was awarded the prize of the Society of Dutch Literature. Mr. Van Praag spent the war years in London and is now living in Brussels. This article is translated from the French by Irving Kristol.

There were some 140,000 Jews in the Netherlands, of whom 80,000 lived in Amsterdam. Because of this great number (the whole population of Amsterdam was less than 800,000) the Jews gave an imprint of their own to certain quarters of the city, and even to Amsterdam as a whole. A character in one of my novels, walking arm in arm with a Jewish girl along the Amstel, sighs: "Amsterdam—the Jewish." And I too in my youth, walking in the center of the city, or along the deep-green canals of the Jewish quarter, and looking into the dark eyes of a daughter of the ghetto, oblivious to her harsh and too familiar accent—I, too, would sigh: "Amsterdam—the Jewish." All that is gone now.

My father was an Amsterdam Jew, but my mother came from the provinces, from Harderwijk, a small town on the Zuyder Zee where her family had lived for many generations. For there was in Holland a vigorous provincial Judaism of small congregations sprinkled throughout the country; the provincial Jews were often more energetic than those of Amsterdam, who were somewhat softened by city life, good food, and the sensual atmosphere of this highly sensual city. They also spoke a purer Dutch, in which was often preserved an earthy accent—as in the writing of my friend Jacob Hiegentlich, who in all his work preserved the tone of his native Limbourg. (He is dead now; he killed himself when the Germans came.) In my mother's time, the provincial Jews were much more assimilated than those of Amsterdam, but on the other hand their religious and community life had not lost its vitality. The orthodox among them set the tone of the community. And a visit by the grand rabbi of the province was an event of the first importance, marked by copious

feasts, with quantities of *boterkoek* and *bolus*—fat-sweet specialties of the Dutch-Jewish cuisine.

Some provincial congregations died out, others grew according to the economic and industrial development of the country. Provincial Jewry as a whole remained strong.

But one day I had a kind of anticipatory revelation of what Holland's Jews were to become: a colony of survivors. My mother and I decided to revisit her native village. Even in the days of my adolescence, the Jewish congregation of Harderwijk, once flourishing and prosperous, had become almost extinct. There remained only a single and vaguely related cousin of my mother's. We went to see him. He was a small Jew, rather distinguished looking—though he was no more than a traveling peddler who toured the surrounding farms—with a pointed, gray beard and eyes that sparkled with a Talmudic irony. We stayed at his house for an hour, and then left. The boat that was to take us back to Amsterdam was already at the dock. A crowd of people was gathered there: fishermen, placid Dutchmen, noisy, blond youngsters—no Jews, except for our cousin—a little man all alone—who had insisted on accompanying us. The boat got quickly under way, and the workers on the dock waved their hands and turned back to the town. Only our vaguely related cousin remained, smaller and more delicate than the others. He stood there a long time, watching us recede into the distance, waving his handkerchief with his graceful fingers. The last survivor of the congregation. I could almost have whispered: "*Baruch hayosheve*—blessed is he who remains." But is it true—is it possible—can he be truly blessed who remains on the dock all alone and watches the others disappear?

I shall write only a few words about the history of our Jews and about their way of living. A few words only; nothing I can write will bring them back.

THE Sephardim arrived in the Low Countries towards the end of the 16th century, and flourished in the course of the next

hundred years. But in the days of my boyhood, this community had greatly decreased in numbers; no more than eight thousand Sephardim remained in Amsterdam. However, that did not prevent the Portuguese Jews from placing their imprint on the entire Jewish community of Amsterdam, just as the Jews in general added certain nuances to the life of the city as a whole. There were some among the Sephardim who continued to speak Spanish and Portuguese until the middle of the 19th century, and for a very long time they maintained a feeling of superiority over the Ashkenazim, scorning to sully their purity by "misalliances" with the "tedescos." The consequent inbreeding destroyed the fine hereditary stock of the Sephardim, and it was not unusual for the children of these aristocrats to be of inferior intelligence and worse—along with some who possessed exceptional talents. Of these latter may be noted the writers Israel and Emmanuel Querido, the painters Jessurun de Mesquita, de Leo Laguna, Texeira de Mattos, and the very great sculptor Joseph Mendes-Dacosta.

Fortunately, the Sephardim did not stay forever in the isolation that was one of the legacies of the Spanish Inquisition. In my days they mixed freely with the Ashkenazim, and there were couples who dared to have printed on their visiting cards: Mr. and Mrs. Coloco-Osorio-Soep. (*Soep* means "soup" in Dutch, and was a good name among the Ashkenazim.)

The Germans, desiring to corrupt their Jewish victims by setting one against the other, began by sparing the Jews of Spanish-Portuguese origin, thereby flattering their particularism. Many were taken in. But later on, they too were beaten, packed on to wagons, and dispatched to the gas chambers. The Sephardic community disappeared. Today a young Ashkenazi, a historian of talent, has been appointed librarian of the old and celebrated Sephardic library of the Montezinos, and the few remaining faithful who, at the hour of prayer, stand in the noble Sephardic synagogue like isolated yew trees on a desolate heath, are almost all Ash-

kenazim. How fond I was of our Sephardim—the fine *hidalgo* manners of their aristocrats, their hispanic Semitism, their marvelous melodies. Especially the melodies. Slowly they would creep round the old leather and gold tapestries of the synagogue and climb twisting round the branches of the candelabra with its bright candle lights.

The Ashkenazim of Holland began to arrive toward the middle of the 17th century. Most of them spoke Yiddish down to the middle of the 19th century. But it was not Russian-Polish Yiddish with its strong admixture of Slavic words; instead, the language was full of words probably of Alsatian origin. They would say "*oren*" for "pray," from the Latin "*orare*," instead of "*davnen*." A worthless fellow was called a "*falterappe*," probably a corruption of the French "*valet de drap*." From the Dutch Sephardim they adopted the curious pronunciation of the letter "ayin" like the "ng" of the English "thing."

FEW as they were, the Dutch Jews belonged to many different classes. The strangest—unique in Western Europe where the Jews generally adhered to the bourgeoisie—was the proletariat: peddlers, traveling hawkers in the provincial markets, workers in the diamond industry, tailors, sawyers. The diamond workers would earn fabulous wages for a while, only to fall into long stretches of poverty. Then they would sell their wives' fur coats purchased during the delirium of abundance, and change their trade, augmenting the number of traveling hawkers and street vendors; or, if they were gifted with eloquence and with what they believed to be elegant manners, they transformed themselves into commercial travelers. The most enterprising and daring clung to the balloon of commerce, which carried them high into the spheres of negotiation and manipulation in the diamond trade; with their stomachs thrust prosperously out in front, they would tell of the pleasures of Paris and their adventures in London.

Among the ordinary workers in the diamond industry, there were many who, upon

their initiation to socialism, fell to the adoration of profane knowledge as their fathers had adored the Torah. They stood in humility and longing before the wide-open doors of Western culture. Their ideal was embodied in the great leader of the diamond workers, the bold and powerful and encyclopaedically self-taught Henri Polak.

There are still some Jewish intellectuals left in Holland, but almost no workers. The cry of the peddlers pushing their carts along the streets and docks is no longer to be heard. Some of them used to have a mixed trade, selling flowers in the summertime and fish during the winter. From house to house they sold their wares—fruits, nuts, herrings, and above all, what they used to call "*zuur*," "sour goods." It was a little Amsterdam-Jewish specialty, this sale of gherkins, onions, and vinagered limes by the thimbleful to loungers and in quantity to housewives. The man who carried on this trade was called "Zuurman."

Of the lively ghetto, with its playful children, its placid elders, its young women banal in their individuality and sublime in their race—the ghetto with its inhabitants indolent in sensuality, pity, and fatigue, or else vibrant with energy, feverish in eyes and jaws—the picturesque ghetto of Rembrandt and Max Lieberman with its shop windows overflowing with pastry or with big, black cigars that the storekeepers had made with their own hands (the manufacture of cigars was also a Jewish trade)—of this ghetto there remain only empty houses, separated by empty stretches of ground, by walls, bristling with broken glass. The inhabitants of the ghetto were sent first to the camp of Westerbork in the province of Drente, and from there to Poland. Thus died the posterity of those who had escaped from the butchers of the Inquisition and from the pogroms of Maria Theresa and of Russia; the noxious gas generated by the poisoned soul of humanity enveloped them at last.

I always had a weakness for the Orthodox milieu. I am not of that generation which had to struggle against the tyranny of a blind and stubborn Orthodoxy as did the

dramatist Herman Heyermans. I was present at the regeneration of Orthodoxy, especially through the Mizrachi movement. The newly Orthodox of Amsterdam lived their religion; it became one with the pavement of the streets on which they lived. On the Sabbath they strolled, calm and smiling, the father in his high hat, the children in their holiday clothes. Some streets, on a Saturday, were animated by those who were going to synagogue, velvet *tallis* bags under their arms. These modern Orthodox Jews understood the text as they said their prayers. The older ones, who were not quite up with the times, mumbled the prayers, gliding comfortably along the Hebrew litanies like children sliding down a banister. One young enthusiast reproached his father for praying without understanding, and the old man replied: "So long as God understands." And it went on that way, in the small synagogue on the ground floor of a middle-class house, right through the *Havdalah*. The old—the "non-moderns"—forgot that they were chanting a warrior's psalm, and from their mouths poured forth a lullaby for old men: "*l'david baruch adoshem tsouri, hamelamed yaday la-kerov*." They floated on their backs in celestial waters, these old men of Amsterdam of the generation of my father—those who came before the waking of the Zionist and Mizrachist consciousness.

IN HOLLAND, in the course of the 19th century, the people of the book had allowed themselves to forget the book. For a long time the Jews of Holland remained ignorant of all things Jewish. Zionism woke them up—Zionism and socialism, and the general atmosphere of Holland. The Dutch have a cult of education, and perhaps nowhere else is so great an importance attached to the instruction of children and adults. The culture of the Jews of Holland was autochthonous—that is to say it grew naturally as both Jewish and Dutch, without tension. And it was therefore a solidly based culture, with none of the ostentation and display that appeared so often in Germany, and without that hollow ring which

could be detected among the Jews of the Slavic countries who sought to encompass all of European culture in one great gulp.

The self-taught who came up from the proletariat were the most interesting of our intellectuals. They adored the knowledge that had cost them so much effort to acquire, and, in the fever of possession, they used it as if it were a weapon. One thinks at once of the writers Israel and Emmanuel Querido, the latter the founder of one of our best publishing houses. (He was killed by the Germans.) And there was Carry van Bruggen, daughter of a *hazan* and teacher in an elementary school who became a brilliant novelist; in love with revolt for its own sake—it was an act of revolt that had freed her from paternal orthodoxy and feminine servitude—she glorified it in a historical-philosophical work consecrated to Prometheus. Her brother, Jakob Israel de Haan, also rebelled, and became a prominent philosopher of law—but later his Jewish consciousness re-awakened and he went to Palestine, where he wrote poems that are like fragments of bleeding flesh: in them, one sees him tossed between re-discovered God and the mocking devil, between his yearning for bourgeois life and his homosexual desires, between Holland and Palestine. Of the self-taught rebels who rose from the Jewish proletariat, the novelist Samuel Goudsmit has survived the massacre.

Most of the ordinary intellectuals, who came from the university, had joined the Zionist movement. They were ardent Zionists but more disciplined and less grandiloquent than is usual among Jews. (They were, after all, Dutch.) At first, the meetings would begin perhaps a half-hour late; but the Polish Jews among them soon stretched this difference between the official time and the actuality into a matter of hours. There was a great deal of discussion, but somewhat less for the pleasure of hearing one's self talk than is customary in Israel. There was Nehemia de Lieme, weighing his words, marrying the profound to the ironic, always master of himself and

always solemn. And there was Bernstein, his disciple, now one of Palestine's leading citizens, attacking all failures of discipline, all faults of organization, every error of easy-going bookkeeping. Organization above all!

The Jewish lower classes of Amsterdam did not always understand Zionism. I remember myself, as a boy, going off with a pretty young girl to sell oranges from house to house for the benefit of Keren Kayemeth Leyisrael. The oranges were attractively laid out in a pretty basket, and decorated with the blue and white cockade. A Jewish peddler came upon us, set down his cart full of fruit, and shouted: "Why are you taking away my business? Why must you compete with a poor *schlemiel* like me?" Then he continued on his way, crying through the quarters of the city—rich and poor—the excellence of his fruits, corrupting their names into incomprehensible gibberish.

As I said, there are still some Jewish intellectuals in Holland. The two great Jewish libraries, the Rosenthaliana and the Montezinos, were saved. The great synagogue of the Sephardim—the "snoge"—has been made an official monument of art. But the special atmosphere of Jewish life is gone. The survivors are getting along all right—yet their bitterness often shines through. The first anecdote I heard when I came back to Holland recently was an old joke that has taken on a new sharpness: An old Jew, a survivor of the ghetto, was taking in the fresh air on a bench in the Vondelpark in

Amsterdam, when a little bird perched on the branch of an overhanging tree, dropped his excrement on the Jew's head. The old man looked up and said: "To a poor Yid you do that—and for the others you sing."

FOR several centuries, one small part of Israel knew repose and liberty. Holland has deserved well of her Jews. She permitted them to be good citizens without insisting they make themselves more Dutch than the Dutch, as was the case in Germany. Except for a little anti-Semitism among the petty bourgeoisie, the Dutch, and above all the Dutch intellectuals, were quite content that their Jews remain Jews. But the fate of Israel came to search them out. Israel is eternal, they say—but not the individual Israelites.

There remain some names. As there is a Calle de la Judería at Toledo or Granada, so there is the Jodenbreestrand, the great street of the Jews in Amsterdam.

We, the survivors—we stop before the houses where our people lived, on the pavements where they used to drag their wooden shoes, beside the walls that no longer throw back their voices. We bend our heads. For we are human, and if the thought that Israel is eternal consoles us a little, still what we loved so much was the temporal aspect under which we knew Israel. And that was in Amsterdam, in the gaiety of the Jewish quarter, where one small part of the Jewish people lived for once confident of the present and of the future—how wrong, oh how wrong!

THE MAN OF TODAY AND THE JEWISH BIBLE

How the Modern Can Recapture Faith

MARTIN BUBER

BIBLIA, books, is the name of a book, of a Book composed of many books. It is really one book, for one basic theme unites all the stories and songs, sayings and prophecies contained within it. The theme of the Bible is the encounter between a group of people and the Lord of the world in the course of history, the sequence of events occurring on earth. Either openly or by implication, the stories are reports of encounters. The songs lament the denial of the grace of encounter, plead that it may be repeated, or give thanks because it has been vouchsafed. The prophecies summon man who has gone astray to turn, to return to the region where the encounter took place, promising him that the torn bond shall once more be made whole.

If this book transmits cries of doubt, it is the doubt which is the destiny of men who after having tasted nearness must experience distance and learn from distance what it alone can teach. When we find love songs in the Bible, we must understand that the

MARTIN BUBER here deals with ideas that have been his life-long concern: the relation of modern man to the religious insights of the past and thus to God; and the special relation of the Jew to the Divine, as adumbrated in the biblical covenant. Martin Buber was born in Vienna in 1878 and studied at the universities of Vienna, Leipzig, Berlin, and Zurich. Since 1933 he has been at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. This article is taken from a volume of Dr. Buber's essays to be published later this month by Schocken Books under the title *Israel and the World*. It is translated from the German by Olga Marx. Another aspect of Dr. Buber's creative labors in the rediscovery of Jewish tradition may be seen in the Hasidic tales published in the "Cedars of Lebanon" department elsewhere in this issue (page 363).

love of God for his world is revealed through the depths of love human beings can feel for one another.

Since this book came into being, it has confronted generation after generation. Each generation must struggle with the Bible in its turn, and come to terms with it. The generations are by no means always ready to listen to what the book has to say, and to obey it; they are often vexed and defiant; nevertheless, the preoccupation with this book is part of their life and they face it in the realm of reality. Even when generations negated the Book, the very negation confirmed the Book's claim upon them; they bore witness to the Book in the very act of denying it.

The picture changes when we shift to the man of today, and by this I mean the "intellectual" man of our time, the man who holds it important for intellectual values to exist, and admits, yes, even himself declares, that their reality is bound up with our own power to realize them. But if we were to question him and probe down to truth—and we do not usually probe that far down—he would have to own that this feeling of his about the obligations of the spirit is in itself only intellectual. It is the signature of our time that the spirit imposes no obligations. We proclaim the rights of the spirit, we formulate its laws, but they enter only into books and discussions, not into our lives. They float in mid-air above our heads, rather than walk the earth in our midst. Everything except everyday life belongs to the realm of the spirit.

Instead of union, a false relationship obtains between the spirit and everyday life. This relationship may shape up as spurious idealism, toward which we may lift our gaze without incurring any obligation to

recover from the exigencies of earth; or it may present itself as spurious realism, which regards the spirit as only a function of life and transforms its unconditionality into a number of conditional characters: psychological, sociological, and others. It is true that some contemporaries realize all the corroding consequences of this separation of two interdependent entities, a corrosion which is bound to penetrate into deeper and deeper strata, until the spirit is debased into a willing and complacent servant of whatever powers happen to rule the world.

The men of whom I am speaking have pondered over how this corrosion can be halted, and have appealed to religion as the only power which is still capable of bringing about a new union between spirit and world. But what goes by the name of religion nowadays will never bring about such union. For nowadays "religion" itself is part of the detached spirit. It is one of the subdivisions—one which is in high favor, to be sure—of the structure erected over and above life, one of the rooms on the top floor, with a very special atmosphere of its own. But this sort of religion is not an entity which includes all of life and, in this its present status, can never become one.

It has lost its unity and so it cannot lead man to inner unity. It has been adapted to this twofold conception of human existence. To exert an influence on contemporary man religion itself would have to return to reality. And religion was always real only when it was free of fear, when it shouldered the load of concreteness instead of rejecting it as something belonging to another realm, when it made the spirit incarnate, and sanctified everyday life.

THE so-called Old Testament constitutes the greatest document of such reality. Two traits—which are however interrelated—set it apart from the other great books of the world religions. One trait is that in the "Old Testament" both events and words are placed in the midst of the people, of history, of the world. What happens does

not happen in a vacuum existing between God and the individual. The Word travels by way of the individual to the people, so that they may hear and translate it into reality. What happens is not superior to the history of the people; it is nothing but the secret of the people's history made manifest. But that very fact places the people acted upon in opposition to the nations which represent—in their own eyes—an end in themselves, to groups concerned only with their own welfare, to the "breath of world history." This people is called upon to weld its members into a community that may serve as a model for the so many and so different peoples. The historical continuity of "seed" and "earth" are bound up with the "blessing" (Gen. 12ff.), and the blessing with the mission. The Holy permeates history without divesting it of its rights.

The second trait is that in the Bible the law is designed to cover the natural course of man's life. Eating meat is connected with animal sacrifice; matrimonial purity is sanctified month after month; man is accepted as he is with all his urges and passions and included in holiness, lest his passions grow into a mania. The desire to own land is not condemned, and renunciation is not demanded, but the true Lord of the land is God, and man is nothing but a "sojourner" in his midst. The Landlord makes a harmonious balance of property ownership, lest inequality arise, grow, and break the bond between the members of the community. Holiness penetrates nature without violating it. The living spirit wishes to spiritualize and quicken life; it wishes spirit and life to find the way to one another; it wishes spirit to take shape as life, and life to be clarified through spirit. The spirit wishes creation to attain perfection through itself.

The function of this Book is to bear witness to the spirit's will to perfection and to the command to serve the spirit in its search for union with life. If we accept the Old Testament as merely "religious writing," as a subdivision of the detached spirit, it will

fail us, and we must needs fail it. If we seize upon it as the expression of a reality which comprises all of life, we really grasp it, and it grasps hold of us. But contemporary man is scarcely capable of this grasp any longer. If he "takes any interest" at all in the Scriptures, it is an abstract, purely "religious" interest, and more often not even that, but an interest connected with the history of religion or civilization, or an aesthetic interest, or the like—at any rate it is an interest that springs from the detached spirit with its numerous autonomous domains. Man of today is not like the generations of old, who stood before the biblical word in order to hearken to or to take offense at it. He no longer confronts his life with the Word; he locks life away in one of many unholy compartments, and then he feels relieved. Thus he paralyzes the power which, of all powers, is best able to save him.

Before demonstrating in greater detail and by way of examples what power the Jewish Bible has to guide the life of the man of today, I must broach the basic question which the thoughtful reader is asking himself at this point: Even if this man of today—even if we were able to approach this whole book with our whole selves, would we not still lack the indispensable prerequisite to its true reception? Would we be able to believe it? Could we believe it? Can we do more than believe that people once did believe as this book reports and claims?

The man of today has no access to a sure and solid faith, nor can it be made accessible to him. If he examines himself seriously, he knows this and may not delude himself further. But he is not denied the possibility of holding himself open to faith. If he is really serious, he too can open up to this book and let its rays strike him where they will. He can give himself up and submit to the test without preconceived notions and without reservations. He can absorb the Bible with all his strength, and wait to see what will happen to him, whether he will not discover within himself a new and

unbiased approach to this or that element in the book. But to this end, he must read the Jewish Bible as though it were something entirely unfamiliar, as though it had not been set before him ready-made, at school and after in the light of "religious" and "scientific" certainties; as though he has not been confronted all his life with sham concepts and sham statements which cited the Bible as their authority.

He must face the book with a new attitude as something new. He must yield to it, withhold nothing in his being, and let whatever will occur between himself and it. He does not know which of its sayings and images will overwhelm him and mold him, from where the spirit will ferment and enter into him, to incorporate itself anew in his body. But he holds himself open. He does not believe anything a priori; he does not disbelieve anything a priori. He reads aloud the words written in the book in front of him; he hears the word he utters and it reaches him. Nothing is prejudged. The current of time flows on, and the contemporary character of this man becomes itself a receiving vessel.

IN ORDER to understand the situation fully, we must picture to ourselves the complete chasm between the Scriptures and the man of today.

The Jewish Bible has always approached, and still does, every generation with the claim that it must be recognized as a document of the true history of the world, that is to say, of the history according to which the world has an origin and a goal. The Jewish Bible demands that the individual fit his own life into this true history, so that "I" may find my own origin in the origin of the world, and my own goal in the goal of the world. But the Jewish Bible does not set a past event as a midpoint between origin and goal. It interposes a movable, circling midpoint which cannot be pinned to any set time, for it is the moment when I, the reader, the hearer, the man, catch through the words of the Bible the voice which from earliest beginnings has

been speaking in the direction of the goal.

The midpoint is this mortal and yet immortal moment of mine. Creation is the origin, redemption the goal. But revelation is not a fixed, dated point poised between the two. The revelation at Sinai is not this midpoint itself, but the perceiving of it, and such perception is possible at any time. That is why a psalm or a prophecy is no less "Torah," i.e., instruction, than the story of the exodus from Egypt. The history of this people—accepting and refusing at once—points to the history of all mankind, but the secret dialogue expressed in the psalms and prophecies points to my own secret.

The Jewish Bible is the historical document of a world swinging between creation and redemption, which, in the course of its history, experiences revelation, a revelation which *I* experience if *I am there*. Thus, we can understand that the resistance of the man of today is that of his innermost being.

The man of today has two approaches to history. He may contemplate it as a free-thinker, and participate in and accept the shifting events, the varying success of the struggles for power, as a promiscuous agglomeration of happenings. To him history will seem a medley of the actions and deaths of peoples, of grasping and losing, triumph and misery, a meaningless hodgepodge to which the mind of man, time and again, gives an unreliable and unsubstantial semblance of meaning. Or he may view history dogmatically, derive laws from past sequences of events and calculate future sequences, as though the "main lines" were already traced on some roll which need merely unroll; as though history were not the vital living, growing, of time, constantly moving from decision to decision, of time into which my time and my decisions stream full force. He regards history as a stark, ever-present, inescapable space.

Both these approaches are a misinterpretation of historic destiny, which is neither chance nor fatality. According to the biblical insight historic destiny is the secret

correlation inhering in the current moment. When we are aware of origin and goal, there is no meaningless drift; we are carried along by a meaning we could never think up for ourselves, a meaning we are to live—not to formulate. And that living takes place in the awful and splendid moment of decision—your moment and mine no less than Alexander's and Caesar's. And yet your moment is not yours but rather the moment of your encounter.

The man of today knows of no beginning. As far as he is concerned, history ripples toward him from some prehistorical cosmic age. He knows of no end; history sweeps him on into a posthistorical cosmic age. What a violent and foolish episode this time between the prehistorical and the posthistorical has become! Man no longer recognizes an origin or a goal because he no longer wants to recognize the midpoint.

Creation and redemption are true only on the premise that revelation is a present experience. Man of today resists the Scriptures because he cannot endure revelation. To endure revelation is to endure this moment full of possible decisions, to respond to and to be responsible for every moment. Man of today resists the Scriptures because he does not want any longer to accept responsibility. He thinks it is venturing a great deal, yet he industriously evades the one real venture, that of responsibility.

INSIGHT into the reality of the Bible begins with drawing a distinction between creation, revelation, and redemption.* Christianity withdrew from such insight—and thus from the grounds of the "Old Testament"—in its earliest theology which fused the essentials of revelation and the essentials of redemption in the Christ. It was entirely logical for Marcion to dispute the value of a creation which from this point of view was bound to seem nothing but a premise, and to brand it as a blunder of another, inferior god. With that act, the essence of time which was closely allied to the essence of

* Franz Rosenzweig, in his "Star of Redemption," had the great merit of having shown this to our era in a new light.

our spirit was abandoned, time which distinguishes between past, present, and future—structures which in the Bible reach their most concrete expression in the three structures of creation, revelation, and redemption.

The only gate which leads to the Bible as a reality is the faithful distinction between the three, not as hypostases or manifestations of God, but as stages, actions, and events in the course of his intercourse with the world, and thus also as the main directions of his movement toward the world. But such distinction must not be exaggerated to mean separation. From the point of view of the Bible, revelation is, as it were, focused in the "middle," creation in the "beginning," and redemption in the "end." But the living truth is that they actually coincide, that "God every day renews the work of the Beginning," but also every day anticipates the work of the end. Certainly both creation and redemption are true only on the premise that revelation is a present experience. But if I did not feel creation as well as redemption happening to myself, I could never understand what creation and redemption are.

This fact must be the starting point for the recurring question, if and how the chasm between man of today and the Scriptures can be bridged. We have already answered the question whether the man of today can believe, by saying that while he is denied the certainty of faith, he has the power to hold himself open to faith. But is not the strangeness of biblical concepts a stumbling stone to his readiness to do so? Has he not lost the reality of creation in his concept of "evolution," that of revelation in the theory of the "unconscious," and that of redemption in the setting up of social or national goals?

We must wholly understand the very substantial quality of this strangeness, before we can even attempt to show that there is still an approach or rather *the* approach.

And again we must begin with the center.

WHAT meaning are we intended to find in the words that God came down in

fire, to the sound of thunder and horn, to the mountain which smoked like a furnace, and spoke to his people? It can mean, I think, one of three things. Either it is figurative language used to express a "spiritual" process; or if biblical history does not recall actual events, but is metaphor and allegory, then it is no longer biblical, and deserves no better fate than to be surrendered to the approach of modern man, the historical, aesthetic, and the like approaches. Or it is the report of a "supernatural" event, one that severs the intelligible sequence of happenings we term natural by interposing something unintelligible.

If that were the case, man of today in deciding to accept the Bible would have to make a sacrifice of intellect which would cut his life irreparably in two, provided he does not want to lapse into the habitual, lazy acceptance of something he does not really believe. In other words, what he is willing to accept would not be the Bible in its totality including all of life, but only religion abstracted from life.

But there is a third possibility: it could be the verbal trace of a natural event, i.e., of an event which took place in the world of the senses common to all men, and fitted into connections which the senses can perceive. But the assemblage that experienced this event experienced it as revelation vouchsafed to them by God, and preserved it as such in the memory of generations, an enthusiastic, spontaneously formative memory. Experience undergone in this way is not self-delusion on the part of the assemblage; it is what they see, what they recognize and perceive with their reason, for natural events are the carriers of revelation, and revelation occurs when he who witnesses the event and sustains it experiences the revelation it contains. This means that he listens to that which the voice, sounding forth from this event, wishes to communicate to him, its witness, to his constitution, to his life, to his sense of duty. It is only when this is true that man of today can find the approach to biblical reality. I, at any rate, believe that is true.

Sometimes we have a personal experience related to those recorded as revelations and capable of opening the way for them. We may unexpectedly grow aware of a certain apperception within ourselves, which was lacking but a moment ago, and whose origin we are unable to discover. The attempt to derive such apperception from the famous unconscious stems from the widespread superstition that the soul can do everything by itself, and it fundamentally means nothing but this: what you have just experienced always was in you. Such notions build up a temporary construction which is useful for psychological orientation, but collapses when I try to stand upon it. But what occurred to me was "otherness," was the touch of the other. Nietzsche says it more honestly, "You take, you do not ask who it is that gives."

But I think that as we take, it is of the utmost importance to know that someone is giving. He who takes what is given him, and does not experience it as a gift, is not really receiving; and so the gift turns into theft. But when we do experience the giving, we find out that revelation exists. And we set foot on the path which will reveal our life and the life of the world as a sign, a communication. This path is the approach. It is on this path that we shall meet with the major experience that is of the same kind as our minor experience.

The perception of revelation is the basis for perceiving creation and redemption. I begin to realize that in inquiring about my own origin and goal I am inquiring about something other than myself, and something other than the world. But in this very realization I begin to recognize the origin and goal of the world.

WHAT meaning are we intended to find in the statement that God created the world in six days? Certainly not that he created it in six ages, and that "create" must mean "come into being"—the interpretation of those who try to contrive an approach to the Bible by forcing it into harmony with current scientific views. But

just as inadequate for our purposes is the mystic interpretation, according to which the acts of creation are not acts, but emanations. It is in keeping with the nature of mysticism to resist the idea that, for our sake, God assumed the lowly form of an acting person. But divest the Bible of the acting character of God, and it loses its significance, and the concepts of a Platonic or Heraclitean system—concepts born from the observation of reality—are far preferable to the homunculus-like principles of emanation in such an interpretation. What meaning, then, are we intended to find? Here there can be no question of verbal traces of an event, because there was none to witness it. Is then access barred to everyone who cannot believe that the biblical story of creation is the pure "word of God"?

The saying of our sages (Babylonian Talmud, Berakhot 31b) to the effect that the Torah speaks the language of men hides a deeper seriousness than is commonly assumed. We must construe it to mean that what is unutterable *can* only be uttered, as it is here expressed, in the language of men. The biblical story of creation is a legitimate stammering account. Man cannot but stammer when he lines up what he knows of the universe into a chronological series of commands and "works" from the divine workshop. But this stammering of his was the only means of doing justice to the task of stating the mystery of how time springs from eternity, and world comes from that which is not world. Compared to this, every attempt to explain cosmogony "scientifically," to supply a logical foundation for the origin of all things, is bound to fail.

If then, the man of today can find the approach to the reality of revelation in the fact that it is our life which is being addressed, how can he find the approach to the reality of creation? His own individual life will not lead him straight to creation as it does to revelation, which he can find so readily because—as we have seen—every moment we live can in itself be its midpoint.

Nevertheless the reality of creation can be found, because every man knows that he is

an individual and unique. Suppose it were possible for a man to make a psycho-physical inventory of his own person, to break down his character into a sum of qualities; and now suppose it were possible for him to trace each separate quality and the concurrence of all back to the most primitive living creatures, and in this way make an uninterrupted genetic analysis of his individuality by determining its derivation and reference—then his form, his face, unprecedented, comparable to none, unique, his voice never heard before, his gestures never seen before, his body informed with spirit, would still exist as the untouched residue, underived and underivable, an entity which is simply present and nothing more.

If after all this futile effort, such a man had the strength to repeat the question, whence, he would in the final analysis discover himself simply as something that was created. Because every man is unique, another first man enters the world whenever a child is born. By being alive, everyone groping like a child back to the origin of his own self, we may experience the fact that there is an origin, a creation.

AND now to the third, the last, and the most difficult problem: How are we to understand the concept that "in the end of days" everything in the world will be resolved, that the world will be so perfectly redeemed that, as it is written, there will be "a new heaven and a new earth"? Here again, two opposite interpretations must be avoided. We must not regard the tidings in the light of another world to come. They mean that this, our world, will be purified to the state of the Kingdom, that creation will be made perfect, but not that our world will be annulled for the sake of another world. But neither do they refer to a more righteous order, but to "righteousness," not to mankind grown more peaceful, but to "peace."

Here too, the voice we hear stammers legitimately. The prophet, who is overwhelmed by the divine word, can only speak in the words of men. He can speak only as one who is able to grasp from what

and whence he is to be redeemed, but not for what and whither. And the man of today? Must not this he hears be strangest to him, exactly because it is closest to his fathomless yearning? He dreams of change, but does not know transformation. He hopes that if not tomorrow, then the next day things will be better, but the idea that truth will come means nothing to him. He is familiar with the idea of development and the overcoming of obstacles, but he can realize neither that a power wishes to redeem him and the world from contradiction, nor that because of the existence of this power it is demanded of him that he turn with the whole of his being. How can we mediate between this man and the biblical message? Where is the bridge?

This is the most difficult of all. The lived moment leads directly to the knowledge of revelation, and thinking about birth leads indirectly to the knowledge of creation. But in his personal life probably not one of us will taste the essence of redemption before his last hour. And yet here too, there is an approach. It is dark and silent and cannot be indicated by any means, save by my asking you to recall your own dark and silent hours. I mean those hours in the lowest depths when our soul hovers over the frail trap door which, at the very next instant, may send us down into destruction, madness, and "suicide" at our own verdict. Indeed, we are astonished that it has not opened up until now.

But suddenly we feel a touch as of a hand. It reaches down to us, it wishes to be grasped—and yet what incredible courage is needed to take the hand, to let it draw us up out of the darkness! This is redemption. We must realize the true nature of the experience proffered us: It is that our "redeemer liveth" (Job 19:18), that he wishes to redeem us—but only by our own acceptance of his redemption with the turning of our whole being.

Approach, I said. For all this still does not constitute a rootedness in biblical reality. But it is the approach to it. It is a beginning.

PREVIOUS CONDITION

A Story

JAMES BALDWIN

I WOKE up shaking, alone in my room. I was clammy cold with sweat; under me the sheet and the mattress were soaked. The sheet was gray and twisted like a rope. I breathed like I had been running.

I couldn't move for the longest while. I just lay on my back, spread-eagled, looking up at the ceiling, listening to the sounds of people getting up in other parts of the house, alarm clocks ringing and water splashing and doors opening and shutting and feet on the stairs. I could tell when people left for work: the hall-door way downstairs whined and shuffled as it opened and gave a funny kind of double slam as it closed. One thud and then a louder thud and then a little final click. While the door was open I could hear the street sounds too, horses' hoofs and delivery wagons and people in the streets and big trucks and motor cars screaming on the asphalt.

I had been dreaming. At night I dreamt and woke up in the morning trembling, but not remembering the dream, except that in the dream I had been running. I could not remember when the dream—or dreams—had started; it had been long ago. For long periods maybe, I would have no dreams at all. And then they would come back, every night, I would try not to go to bed, I would

go to sleep frightened and wake up frightened and have another day to get through with the nightmare at my shoulder. Now I was back from Chicago, busted, living off my friends in a dirty furnished room downtown. The show I had been with had folded in Chicago. It hadn't been much of a part—or much of a show either, to tell the truth. I played a kind of intellectual Uncle Tom, a young college student working for his race. The playwright had wanted to prove he was a liberal, I guess. But, as I say, the show had folded and here I was, back in New York and hating it. I knew that I should be getting another job, making the rounds, pounding the pavement. But I didn't. I couldn't face it. It was summer. I seemed to be fagged out. And every day I hated myself more. Acting's a rough life, even if you're white. I'm not tall and I'm not good looking and I can't sing or dance and I'm not white; so even at the best of times I wasn't in much demand.

THE room I lived in was heavy ceilinged, perfectly square, with walls the color of chipped dry blood. Jules Weissman, a Jew-boy, had got the room for me. It's a room to sleep in, he said, or maybe to die in but God knows it wasn't meant to live in. Perhaps because the room was so hideous it had a fantastic array of light fixtures: one on the ceiling, one on the left wall, two on the right wall, and a lamp on the table beside my bed. My bed was in front of the window through which nothing ever blew but dust. It was a furnished room and they'd thrown enough stuff in it to furnish three rooms its size. Two easy chairs and a desk, the bed, the table, a straight-backed chair, a bookcase, a cardboard wardrobe; and my books and my suitcase, both unpacked; and my

JAMES BALDWIN's article "The Harlem Ghetto: Winter 1948," published in the February COMMENTARY, won national comment. "Previous Condition," his first published short story, is a sensitive and powerful study of the life of a young Negro artist in present-day American society. It heralds, we think, an important new talent on the literary scene. Mr. Baldwin was born in New York City in 1924, and is the author of a novel about life in Harlem which will be published some time next year. He was recently awarded a one year writing fellowship by the Julius Rosenwald Fund.

dirty clothes flung in a corner. It was the kind of room that defeated you. It had a fireplace, too, and a heavy marble mantelpiece and a great gray mirror above the mantelpiece. It was hard to see anything in the mirror very clearly—which was perhaps just as well—and it would have been worth your life to have started a fire in the fireplace.

Well, you won't have to stay here long, Jules told me the night I came. Jules smuggled me in, sort of, after dark, when everyone had gone to bed.

Christ, I hope not.

I'll be moving to a big place soon, Jules said. You can move in with me. He turned all the lights on. Think it'll be all right for a while? He sounded apologetic, as though he had designed the room himself.

Oh, sure. D'you think I'll have any trouble?

I don't think so. The rent's paid. She can't put you out.

I didn't say anything to that.

Sort of stay undercover, Jules said. You know.

Roger, I said.

I had been living there for three days, timing it so I left after everyone else had gone, coming back late at night when everyone else was asleep. But I knew it wouldn't work. A couple of the tenants had seen me on the stairs, a woman had surprised me coming out of the john. Every morning I waited for the landlady to come banging on the door. I didn't know what would happen. It might be all right. It might not be. But the waiting was getting me.

The sweat on my body was turning cold. Downstairs a radio was tuned in to the Breakfast Symphony. They were playing Beethoven. I sat up and lit a cigarette. Peter, I said, don't let them scare you to death. You're a man, too. I listened to Ludwig and I watched the smoke rise to the dirty ceiling. Under Ludwig's drums and horns I listened to hear footsteps on the stairs.

I'd done a lot of traveling in my time. I'd knocked about through St. Louis, Frisco, Seattle, Detroit, New Orleans, worked at

just about everything. I'd run away from my old lady when I was about sixteen. She'd never been able to handle me. You'll never be nothin' *but* a bum, she'd say. We lived in an old shack in a town in New Jersey in the nigger part of town, the kind of houses colored people live in all over the US. I hated my mother for living there. I hated all the people in my neighborhood. They went to church and they got drunk. They were nice to the white people. When the landlord came around they paid him and took his crap.

THE first time I was ever called nigger I was seven years old. It was a little white girl with long black curls. I used to leave the front of my house and go wandering by myself through town. This little girl was playing ball alone and as I passed her the ball rolled out of her hands into the gutter.

I threw it back to her.

Let's play catch, I said.

But she held the ball and made a face at me.

My mother don't let me play with niggers, she told me.

I did not know what the word meant. But my skin grew warm. I stuck my tongue out at her.

I don't care. Keep your old ball. I started down the street.

She screamed after me: Nigger, nigger, nigger!

I screamed back: Your mother was a nigger!

I asked my mother what a nigger was.

Who called you that?

I heard somebody say it.

Who?

Just somebody.

Go wash your face, she said. You dirty as sin. Your supper's on the table.

I went to the bathroom and splashed water on my face and wiped my face and hands on the towel.

You call that clean? my mother cried. Come here, boy!

She dragged me back to the bathroom and began to soap my face and neck.

You run around dirty like you do all the time, everybody'll call you a little nigger, you hear? She rinsed my face and looked at my hands and dried me. Now. Go on and eat your supper.

I didn't say anything. I went to the kitchen and sat down at the table. I remember I wanted to cry. My mother sat down across from me.

Mama, I said. She looked at me. I started to cry.

She came around to my side of the table and took me in her arms.

Baby, don't fret. Next time somebody calls you nigger you tell them you'd rather be your color than be lowdown and nasty like some white folks is.

We formed gangs when I was older, my friends and I. We met white boys and their friends on the opposite sides of fences and we threw rocks and tin cans at each other.

I'd come home bleeding. My mother would slap me and scold me and cry.

Boy, you wanna get killed? You wanna end up like your father?

My father was a bum and I had never seen him. I was named for him: Peter.

I was always in trouble; truant officers, welfare workers, everybody else in town.

You ain't never gonna be nothin' *but* a bum, my mother said.

By and by older kids I knew finished school and got jobs and got married and settled down. They were going to settle down and bring more black babies into the world and pay the same rents for the same old shacks and it would go on and on—

When I was sixteen I ran away. I left a note and told Mama not to worry, I'd come back one day and I'd be all right. But when I was twenty-two she died. I came back and put my mother in the ground. Everything was like it had been. Our house had not been painted and the porch floor sagged and there was somebody's raincoat stuffed in the broken window. Another family was moving in.

Their furniture was stacked along the walls and their children were running through the house and laughing and some-

body was frying pork chops in the kitchen. The oldest boy was tacking up a mirror.

LAST year Ida took me driving in her big car and we passed through a couple of towns upstate. We passed some crumbling houses on the left. The clothes on the line were flying in the wind.

Are people living there? asked Ida.

Just darkies, I said.

Ida passed the car ahead, banging angrily on the horn. D'you know you're becoming paranoiac, Peter?

All right. All right. I know a lot of white people are starving too.

You're damn right they are. I know a little about poverty myself.

Ida had come from the kind of family called shanty Irish. She was raised in Boston. She's a very beautiful woman who married young and married for money—so now I can afford to support attractive young men, she'd giggle. Her husband was a ballet dancer who was forever on the road. Ida suspected that he went with boys. Not that I give a damn, she said, as long as he leaves me alone. When we met last year she was thirty and I was twenty-five. We had a pretty stormy relationship but we stuck. Whenever I got to town I called her; whenever I was stranded out of town I'd let her know. We never let it get too serious. She went her way and I went mine.

In all this running around I'd learned a few things. Like a prizefighter learns to take a blow or a dancer learns to fall, I'd learned how to get by. I'd learned never to be belligerent with policemen, for instance. No matter who was right, I was certain to be wrong. What might be accepted as just good old American independence in someone else would be insufferable arrogance in me. After the first few times I realized that I had to play smart, to act out the role I was expected to play. I only had one head and it was too easy to get it broken. When I faced a policeman I acted like I didn't know a thing. I let my jaw drop and I let my eyes get big. I didn't give him any smart answers, none of the crap about my rights.

I figured out what answers he wanted and I gave them to him. I never let him think he wasn't king. If it was more than routine, if I was picked up on suspicion of robbery or murder in the neighborhood I looked as humble as I could and kept my mouth shut and prayed. I took a couple of beatings but I stayed out of prison and I stayed off chain gangs. That was also due to luck, Ida pointed out once. Maybe it would've been better for you if you'd been a little less lucky. Worse things have happened than chain gangs. Some of them have happened to you.

There was something in her voice. What are you talking about? I asked.

Don't lose your temper. I said maybe.

You mean you think I'm a coward?

I didn't say that, Peter.

But you meant that. Didn't you?

No. I didn't mean that. I didn't mean anything. Let's not fight.

There are times and places when a Negro can use his color like a shield. He can trade on the subterranean Anglo-Saxon guilt and get what he wants that way; or some of what he wants. He can trade on his nuisance value, his value as forbidden fruit; he can use it like a knife, he can twist it and get his vengeance that way. I knew these things long before I realized that I knew them and in the beginning I used them, not knowing what I was doing. Then when I began to see it, I felt betrayed. I felt beaten as a person. I had no honest place to stand.

This was the year before I met Ida. I'd been acting in stock companies and little theaters; sometimes fairly good parts. People were nice to me. They told me I had talent. They said it sadly, as though they were thinking, What a pity, he'll never get anywhere. I had got to the point where I resented praise and I resented pity and I wondered what people were thinking when they shook my hand. In New York I met some pretty fine people; easygoing, hard-drinking, flotsam and jetsam; and they liked me; and I wondered if I trusted them; if I was able any longer to trust anybody. Not on top, where all the world could see, but underneath where everybody lives.

SOON I would have to get up. I listened to Ludwig. He shook the little room like the footsteps of a giant marching miles away. On summer evenings (and maybe we would go this summer) Jules and Ida and I would go up to the Stadium and sit beneath the pillars on the cold stone steps. There it seemed to me the sky was far away; and I was not myself, I was high and lifted up. We never talked, the three of us. We sat and watched the blue smoke curl in the air and watched the orange tips of cigarettes. Every once in a while the boys who sold popcorn and soda pop and ice cream climbed the steep steps chattering; and Ida shifted slightly and touched her blue-black hair; and Jules scowled. I sat with my knee up, watching the lighted half-moon below, the black-coated, straining conductor, the faceless men beneath him moving together in a rhythm like the sea. There were pauses in the music for the rushing, calling, halting piano. Everything would stop except the climbing soloist; he would reach a height and everything would join him, the violins first and then the horns; and then the deep blue bass and the flute and the bitter trampling drums; beating, beating and mounting together and stopping with a crash like daybreak. When I first heard the *Messiah* I was alone; my blood bubbled like fire and wine; I cried; like an infant crying for its mother's milk; or a sinner running to meet Jesus.

Now below the music I heard footsteps on the stairs. I put out my cigarette. My heart was beating so hard I thought it would tear my chest apart. Someone knocked on the door.

I thought: Don't answer. Maybe she'll go away.

But the knocking came again, harder this time.

Just a minute, I said. I sat on the edge of the bed and put on my bathrobe. I was trembling like a fool. For Christ's sake, Peter, you've been through this before. What's the worst thing that can happen? You won't have a room. The world's full of rooms.

When I opened the door the landlady stood there, red-and-whitefaced and hysterical.

Who are you? I didn't rent this room to you.

My mouth was dry. I started to say something.

I can't have no colored people here, she said. All my tenants are complainin'. Women afraid to come home nights.

They ain't gotta be afraid of me, I said. I couldn't get my voice up; it rasped and rattled in my throat; and I began to be angry. I wanted to kill her. My friend rented this room for me, I said.

Well, I'm sorry, he didn't have no right to do that, I don't have nothin' against you, but you gotta get out.

Her glasses blinked, opaque in the light on the landing. She was frightened to death. She was afraid of me but she was more afraid of losing her tenants. Her face was mottled with rage and fear, her breath came rushed and little bits of spittle gathered at the edges of her mouth; her breath smelled bad, like rotting hamburger on a July day.

You can't put me out, I said. This room was rented in my name. I started to close the door, as though the matter was finished: I live here, see, this is my room, you can't put me out.

You get outa my house! she screamed. I got the right to know who's in my house! This is a white neighborhood, I don't rent to colored people. Why don't you go on uptown, like you belong?

I can't stand niggers, I told her. I started to close the door again but she moved and stuck her foot in the way. I wanted to kill her, I watched her stupid, wrinkled frightened white face and I wanted to take a club, a hatchet, and bring it down with all my weight, splitting her skull down the middle where she parted her iron-grey hair.

Get out of the door, I said. I want to get dressed.

But I knew that she had won, that I was already on my way. We stared at each other. Neither of us moved. From her came an emanation of fear and fury and something

else. You maggot-eaten bitch, I thought. I said evilly, You wanna come in and watch me? Her face didn't change, she didn't take her foot away. My skin prickled, tiny hot needles punctured my flesh. I was aware of my body under the bathrobe; and it was as though I had done something wrong, something monstrous, years ago, which no one had forgotten and for which I would be killed.

If you don't get out, she said, I'll get a policeman to put you out.

I grabbed the door to keep from touching her. All right. All right. You can have the goddamn room. Now get out and let me dress.

She turned away. I slammed the door. I heard her going down the stairs. I threw stuff into my suitcase. I tried to take as long as possible but I cut myself while shaving because I was afraid she would come back upstairs with a policeman.

JULES was making coffee when I walked in.

Good morning, good morning! What happened to you?

No room at the inn, I said. Pour a cup of coffee for the notorious son of man. I sat down and dropped my suitcase on the floor.

Jules looked at me. Oh. Well. Coffee coming up.

He got out the coffee cups. I lit a cigarette and sat there. I couldn't think of anything to say. I knew that Jules felt bad and I wanted to tell him that it wasn't his fault.

He pushed coffee in front of me and sugar and cream.

Cheer up, baby. The world's wide and life—life, she is very long.

Shut up. I don't want to hear any of your bad philosophy.

Sorry.

I mean, let's not talk about the good, the true, and the beautiful.

All right. But don't sit there holding onto your table manners. Scream if you want to.

Screaming won't do any good. Besides I'm a big boy now.

I stirred my coffee. Did you give her a fight? Jules asked.

I shook my head. No.

Why the hell not?

I shrugged; a little ashamed now. I couldn't have won it. What the hell.

You might have won it. You might have given her a couple of bad moments.

Goddamit to hell, I'm sick of it. Can't I get a place to sleep without dragging it through the courts? I'm goddamn tired of battling every Tom, Dick, and Harry for what everybody else takes for granted. I'm tired, man, tired! Have you ever been sick to death of something? Well, I'm sick to death. And I'm scared. I've been fighting so goddamn long I'm not a person any more. I'm not Booker T. Washington. I've got no vision of emancipating anybody. I want to emancipate myself. If this goes on much longer, they'll send me to Bellevue, I'll blow my top, I'll break somebody's head. I'm not worried about that miserable little room. I'm worried about what's happening to me, *to me*, inside. I don't walk the streets, I crawl. I've never been like this before. Now when I go to a strange place I wonder what will happen, will I be accepted, if I'm accepted, can I accept?—

Take it easy, Jules said.

Jules, I'm beaten.

I don't think you are. Drink your coffee.

Oh, I cried, I know you think I'm making it dramatic, that I'm paranoiac and just inventing trouble! Maybe I think so sometimes, how can I tell? You get so used to being hit you find you're always waiting for it. Oh, I know, you're Jewish, you get kicked around, too, but you can walk into a bar and nobody *knows* you're Jewish and if you go looking for a job you'll get a better job than mine! How can I say what it feels like? I don't know. I know everybody's in trouble and nothing is easy, but how can I explain to you what it feels like to be black? when I don't understand it and don't want to and spend all my time trying to forget it? I don't want to hate anybody—but now maybe, I can't love anybody either—are we friends? can we be really friends?

We're friends, Jules said, don't worry about it. He scowled. If I wasn't Jewish I'd ask you why you don't live in Harlem. I looked at him. He raised his hand and smiled—But I'm Jewish, so I didn't ask you. Ah Peter, he said, I can't help you—take a walk, get drunk, we're all in this together.

I stood up. I'll be around later. I'm sorry.

Don't be sorry. I'll leave my door open. Bunk here for awhile.

Thanks, I said.

I felt that I was drowning; that hatred had corrupted me like cancer in the bone.

I SAW Ida for dinner. We met in a restaurant in the Village, an Italian place in a gloomy cellar with candles on the tables.

It was not a busy night, for which I was grateful. When I came in there were only two other couples on the other side of the room. No one looked at me. I sat down in a corner booth and ordered a Scotch old-fashioned. Ida was late and I had three of them before she came.

She was very fine in black, a high-necked dress with a pearl choker; and her hair was combed page-boy style, falling just below her ears.

You look real sweet, baby.

Thank you. It took fifteen extra minutes but I hoped it would be worth it.

It was worth it. What're you drinking?

Oh—what're you drinking?

Old-fashioneds.

She sniffed and looked at me. How many?

I laughed. Three.

Well, she said, I suppose you had to do something. The waiter came over. We decided on one Manhattan and one lasagna and one spaghetti with clam sauce and another old-fashioned for me.

Did you have a constructive day, sweetheart? Find a job?

Not today, I said. I lit her cigarette. Metro offered me a fortune to come to the coast and do the lead in *Native Son* but I turned it down. Type casting, you know. It's so difficult to find a decent part.

Well, if they don't come up with a decent

offer soon tell them you'll go back to Selznick. *He'll find you a part with guts—the very idea of offering you Native Son!* I wouldn't stand for it.

You ain't gotta tell me. I told them if they didn't find me a decent script in two weeks I was through, that's all.

Now that's talking, Peter my lad.

The drinks came and we sat in silence for a minute or two. I finished half of my drink at a swallow and played with the toothpicks on the table. I felt Ida watching me.

Peter, you're going to be awfully drunk.

Honeychile, the first thing a southern gentleman learns is how to hold his liquor.

That myth is older than the rock of ages. And anyway you come from Jersey.

I finished my drink and snarled at her: that's just as good as the South.

Across the table from me I could see that she was readying herself for trouble: her mouth tightened slightly, setting her chin so that the faint cleft showed: What happened to you today?

I resented her concern; I resented my need. Nothing worth talking about, I muttered, just a mood.

And I tried to smile at her, to wipe away the bitterness.

Now I know something's the matter. Please tell me.

It sounded trivial as hell: You know the room Jules found for me? Well, the landlady kicked me out of it today.

God save the American republic, Ida said. D'you want to waste some of my husband's money? We can sue her.

Forget it. I'll end up with lawsuits in every state in the union.

Still, as a gesture—

The devil with the gesture. I'll get by.

The food came. I didn't want to eat. The first mouthful hit my belly like a gong. Ida began cutting up lasagna.

Peter, she said, try not to feel so badly. We're all in this together the whole world. Don't let it throw you. What can't be helped you have to learn to live with.

That's easy for you to say, I told her.

She looked at me quickly and looked away. I'm not pretending that it's easy to do, she said.

I didn't believe that she could really understand it; and there was nothing I could say. I sat like a child being scolded, looking down at my plate, not eating, not saying anything. I wanted her to stop talking, to stop being intelligent about it, to stop being calm and grown-up about it; good Lord, none of us has ever grown up, we never will.

It's no better anywhere else, she was saying. In all of Europe there's famine and disease, in France and England they hate the Jews—nothing's going to change, baby, people are too empty-headed, too empty-hearted—it's always been like that, people always try to destroy what they don't understand—and they hate almost everything because they understand so little—

I BEGAN to sweat in my side of the booth. I wanted to stop her voice. I wanted her to eat and be quiet and leave me alone. I looked around for the waiter so I could order another drink. But he was on the far side of the restaurant, waiting on some people who had just come in; a lot of people had come in since we had been sitting there.

Peter, Ida said, Peter please don't look like that.

I grinned: the painted grin of the professional clown. Don't worry, baby, I'm all right. I know what I'm going to do. I'm gonna go back to my people where I belong and find me a nice, black nigger wench and raise me a flock of babies.

Ida had an old maternal trick; the grin tricked her into using it now. She raised her fork and rapped me with it across the knuckles. Now, stop that. You're too old for that.

I screamed and stood up screaming and knocked the candle over: Don't *do* that, you bitch, don't *ever* do that!

She grabbed the candle and set it up and glared at me. Her face had turned perfectly white: Sit down! Sit *down*!

I fell back into my seat. My stomach felt like water. Everyone was looking at us. I

turned cold, seeing what they were seeing: a black boy and a white woman, alone together. I knew it would take nothing to have them at my throat.

I'm sorry, I muttered, I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

The waiter was at my elbow. Is everything all right, Miss?

Yes, quite, thank you. She sounded like a princess dismissing a slave. I didn't look up. The shadow of the waiter moved away from me.

Baby, Ida said, forgive me, please forgive me.

I stared at the table cloth. She put her hand on mine, brightness and blackness.

Let's go, I said, I'm terribly sorry.

She motioned for the check. When it came she handed the waiter a ten dollar bill without looking. She picked up her bag.

Shall we go to a nightclub or a movie or something?

No, honey, not tonight. I looked at her. I'm tired, I think I'll go on over to Jules' place. I'm gonna sleep on his floor for a while. Don't worry about me. I'm all right.

She looked at me steadily. She said: I'll come see you tomorrow?

Yes, baby, please.

The waiter brought the change and she tipped him. We stood up; as we passed the tables (not looking at the people) the ground under me seemed falling, the doorway seemed impossibly far away. All my muscles tensed; I seemed ready to spring; I was waiting for the blow.

I put my hands in my pockets and we walked to the end of the block. The lights were green and red, the lights from the theater across the street exploded blue and yellow, off and on.

Peter?

Yes?

I'll see you tomorrow?

Yeah. Come by Jules'. I'll wait for you.

Goodnight darling.

Goodnight.

I started to walk away. I felt her eyes on my back. I kicked a bottle-top on the sidewalk.

God save the American republic.

I DROPPED into the subway and got on an uptown train, not knowing where it was going and not caring. Anonymous, islanded people surrounded me, behind newspapers, behind make-up, fat, fleshy masks and flat eyes. I watched the empty faces. (No one looked at me.) I looked at the ads, unreal women and pink-cheeked men selling cigarettes, candy, shaving cream, night gowns, chewing gum, movies, sex; sex without organs, drier than sand and more secret than death. The train stopped. A white boy and a white girl got on. She was nice, short, svelte. Nice legs. She was hanging on his arm. He was the football type, blonde, ruddy. They were dressed in summer clothes. The wind from the doors blew her print dress. She squealed, holding the dress at the knees and giggled and looked at him. He said something I didn't catch and she looked at me and the smile died. She stood so that she faced him and had her back to me. I looked back at the ads. Then I hated them. I wanted to do something to make them hurt, something that would crack the pinkcheeked mask. The white boy and I did not look at each other again. They got off at the next stop.

I wanted to keep on drinking. I got off in Harlem and went to a rundown bar on Seventh Avenue. My people, my people. Sharpies stood on the corner, waiting. Women in summer dresses pranced by on wavering heels. Click clack. Click clack. There were white mounted policemen in the streets. On every block there was another policeman on foot. I saw a black cop.

God save the American republic.

The juke box was letting loose with "Hamps' Boogie." The place was jumping. I walked over to the man.

Rye, I said.

I was standing next to somebody's grandmother. Hello papa. What you puttin' down?

Baby, you can't pick it up, I told her. My rye came and I drank.

Nigger, she said, you must think you's somebody.

I didn't answer. She turned away, back

to her beer, keeping time to the juke box, her face sullen and heavy and aggrieved. I watched her out of the side of my eye. She had been good looking once, pretty even, before she hit the bottle and started crawling into too many beds. She was flabby now, flesh heaved all over in her thin dress. I wondered what she'd be like in bed; then I realized that I was a little excited by her; I laughed and set my glass down.

The same, I said. And a beer chaser.

The juke box was playing something else now, something brassy and commercial which I didn't like. I kept on drinking, listening to the voices of my people, watching the faces of my people. (God pity us, the terrified republic.) Now I was sorry to have angered the woman who still sat next to me, now deep in conversation with another, younger woman. I longed for some opening, some sign, something to make me part of the life around me. But there was nothing except my color. A white outsider coming in would have seen a young Negro drink-

ing in a Negro bar, perfectly in his element, in his place, as the saying goes. But the people here knew differently, as I did. I didn't seem to have a place.

So I kept on drinking by myself, saying to myself after each drink, Now I'll go. But I was afraid; I didn't want to sleep on Jules' floor; I didn't want to go to sleep. I kept on drinking and listening to the juke-box. They were playing Ella Fitzgerald, "Cow-Cow Boogie."

Let me buy you a drink, I said to the woman.

She looked at me, startled, suspicious, ready to blow her top.

On the level, I said. I tried to smile. Both of you.

I'll take a beer, the young one said.

I was shaking like a baby. I finished my drink.

Fine, I said. I turned to the bar.

Baby, said the old one, what's your story?

The man put three beers on the counter.

I got no story, Ma, I said.

BRITAIN'S STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL

The Labor Government After Three Years

GEORGE ORWELL

IT IS characteristic of our age that at the time of the 1945 General Election one could see fairly clearly what problems the Labor government was facing, and that it is just as difficult today as it was then to predict either success or failure. This is the age of the unresolved dilemma, of the struggle which never slows down and never leads to a decision. It is as though the world were suffering from a disease which is simultaneously acute, chronic, and not fatal.

In Britain we have lived for three years in a state of almost continuous crisis, like one of those radio serials in which the hero falls over a precipice at the end of each instalment. The supreme calamity is, of course, always averted, but the end of the story never seems to be any nearer. Bankruptcy has been put off and put off by American loans, by "austerity," and by the spending of reserves, and when those ex-

For many of the democratic peoples throughout the world, Great Britain's socialist experiment represents a crucial hope for the development of a workable alternative to both capitalism and Communism; and from any point of view, the success or failure of Britain's Labor government must be recognized as immensely important to the final outcome of the present struggle between East and West. GEORGE ORWELL, one of the most acute political observers in England, here examines the record of the Labor government in terms of the fundamental question: is socialism compatible with democracy? Mr. Orwell, at once an intellectual and a man of action, fought in the POUM militia during the Spanish Civil War, served with the British Home Guard during the recent conflict, and has been literary editor of the *London Tribune*. He is the author of a number of books, of which the latest is *Animal Farm*, a satire on Communism. He was born in Bengal, India, in 1903.

pedients cease to work it may be put off still further, possibly for decades, by a successful drive for exports: but the fundamental problem of making Britain genuinely solvent without sinking the standard of living to an unbearably low level remains untouched.

It is, I think, important to realize that in Britain the struggle between collectivism and laissez-faire is secondary. The main objective is national survival. Looking on from the outside and reading the British press, one might easily get the idea that the country is groaning beneath bureaucratic misrule and would be only too glad to return to the good old days of free enterprise; but this merely appears to be so because the big capitalists and the middling entrepreneur class are disproportionately vocal.

Britain is in many ways a conservative country, but it is also a country without a peasantry, one in which the desire for economic liberty is not strong or widespread. Property, in Britain, means a house, furniture, and a few hundred pounds' worth of savings; freedom means freedom of thought and speech, or the power to do what you choose in your spare time. The great majority of people take it for granted that they will live on wages or salaries rather than profits, welcome the idea of birth-to-death social insurance, and do not feel strongly one way or the other about the nationalization of industry. Rationing and controls generally are, of course, in a sense unpopular, but this is only important in that it increases the exhaustion and boredom resulting from eight years of overwork.

We are handicapped, in fact, not by any positive desire to return to capitalism

but by the habits of mind acquired during prosperity (including the ideology of the socialist movement itself).

EVEN today, and even in left-wing circles, it is not fully grasped that Britain's economic position is an inherently bad one. A small overpopulated country, importing its food and paying for it with exports, can only keep going so long as the rest of the world is not industrialized. If the present world-wide development of industry continues, there will in the long run be no reason for international trade, except in raw materials, a few tropical products, and possibly a few luxury goods. All the advantage will lie—does already lie—with large autarchic countries like Russia or the United States. Britain, therefore, can only survive as an "advanced" and populous country if it is integrated into a much larger area.

At present, this may happen in one of four ways. One is by the formation of a union of Western Europe plus Africa; another is by tightening the links of the Commonwealth and transferring perhaps half the population of Britain to the English-speaking dominions; a third is by allowing Britain, with the rest of Europe, to become part of the Russian system; and the final possibility is by the accession of Britain to the United States. The objection in every case is obvious.

The first alternative, the most canvassed at present and perhaps the most hopeful, faces enormous difficulties and dangers, of which Russian hostility is only the most immediate. The second, even supposing the dominions to be prepared for it, could probably not be carried out except by a despotic government which was accustomed to transporting human beings like shiploads of cattle. The third, though it may happen as a result of defeat in war, can be ruled out as a possibility, since no one except a handful of Communists desires it. The fourth is quite likely to happen, but it is unacceptable from a British point of view, since it would mean becoming very definitely a junior partner and being tied to a country

which everyone except a few Tories regards as politically backward.

Even if any of these possibilities, or some combination of them, comes to pass, it will only do so after a long delay, whereas the need for solvency is immediate. The leaders of the Labor government, therefore, can only make their plans on the assumption that Britain has got to be self-sufficient in the near future. They are endeavoring to bring a European union into being, they hope and believe that when it exists the dominions will adhere to it, and they are determined—indeed, they are obliged—to remain on goods terms with the United States; but their immediate aim must be to make Britain's exports balance her imports. And they have to do this with worn-out industrial equipment, with foreign preoccupations which demand large armed forces and are therefore a heavy drain on man-power, and with a working class which is tired and not too well fed, and which fought the war and voted at the General Election in the expectation of something quite different.

IN 1945, approximately half the electorate voted Labor. I believe it would be an exaggeration to say that the majority of these people voted for Socialism. They voted for full employment, bigger old-age pensions, the raising of the school-leaving age, more social and economic equality, and more democracy all round; and for nationalization of industry as a way of bringing these things about. The government, even if it wants to, cannot afford to disappoint its supporters altogether, and therefore has to combine basic reconstruction with immediate reforms that make the reconstruction more difficult. It would have been almost impossible, for instance, for a Labor government not to give re-housing first priority; but, necessary though the houses are, this means reducing the labor and materials that can be allotted to industrial building. The change-over to national ownership is not in itself an inspiring process, and in the popular regard the Labor party is the party that stands for shorter working hours, a free health service,

day nurseries, free milk for school children, and the like, rather than the party that stands for Socialism.

Unfortunately, given the desperate shortage of nearly everything, it is not easy to improve the lives of the people in any material way. Physically, the average British citizen is probably somewhat worse off than he was three years ago. The housing situation is extremely bad; food, though not actually insufficient, is unbearably dull. The prices of cigarettes, beer, and unrationed food such as vegetables are fantastic. And clothes rationing is an increasing hardship since its effects are cumulative. We are in the transition period which awaits all left-wing parties when they attain to power, and which always comes as a painful surprise because so little has been said about it beforehand. In general, left-wing parties gain their following by promising better material conditions, but when the test comes it always turns out that those conditions are not attainable immediately, but only after a long, self-denying struggle during which the average man is actually worse off than he was before he started. And precisely because he is worse off he refuses, or is unable, to make the effort demanded of him. One sees a perfect illustration of this in the struggle over the British coal mines.

The coal mines had to be nationalized, because in no other way was it possible to recapitalize them to the extent needed to bring them up to date. At the same time nationalization makes no immediate difference. The basic fact about the British mines is that they are old and neglected, and working conditions in them are so intolerable that without direct coercion, or the threat of unemployment, it is almost impossible to recruit sufficient labor to keep them going. Ever since the war ended we have had about fifty thousand less miners than we need, with the result that we can only with the greatest difficulty produce enough coal for our own needs, while an extra fifteen million tons for export seems an almost impossible objective. Of course the mines can be and probably will be modern-

ized, but the process will take several years, and in the meantime, in order to make or buy the necessary machinery, our need of coal will be all the greater.

The same situation reproduces itself in less acute forms throughout the whole of industry. Nor is it easy, when people are tired already, to get them to work harder by direct economic inducements. If wages are evened out, labor drifts away from the more disagreeable jobs: if especially high rates are paid for those jobs, absenteeism increases, because it is then possible to earn enough to live on by working only three or four shifts a week. Not only individual absenteeism, but the innumerable stoppages and unofficial strikes of the past few years have probably been due to sheer exhaustion quite as much as to any economic grievance. It is true that the amount of time lost by industrial disputes has been small compared with what it was in the years immediately following the 1914-18 war, but there is the important difference that the strikes of that period, when successful, brought concrete benefits to the working class. Today, when the main problem is how to produce a bare sufficiency of goods, a strike is in effect a blow against the community as a whole, including the strikers themselves, and its net effect is inflationary.

UNDERNEATH our present difficulties there lie two facts which the Socialist movement has always tended to ignore. One is that certain jobs which are vitally necessary are never done except under some kind of compulsion. As soon as you have full employment, therefore, you have to make use of forced labor for the dirtier kinds of work. (You can call it by some more soothing name, of course.) The other fact I have already alluded to: the radical impoverishment of Britain—the impossibility, at this stage, of raising the working-class standard of living, or even, probably, of maintaining it at its present level.

I do not profess to know whether our immediate economic problem will be solved. Putting aside the danger of war with the

Soviet Union, it depends in the short run on the success of the Marshall Plan, and in the somewhat longer run on the formation of a Western Union or on the ability of Britain to keep ahead in the scramble for markets. But what is certain is that we can never return to the favored position that we held in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Until they found themselves in power and therefore up against hard facts, British Socialists would not readily admit that our national income, which they wanted to divide more equitably, was in part the product of colonial exploitation. Over a long period we not only produced less than we consumed (our exports have not balanced our imports since 1913), but we had the benefit of cheap raw materials and assured markets in countries which we held as colonies or could overawe by military force.

There were many reasons why this state of affairs could not last forever, and one reason was the decay of imperialist sentiment in the British people themselves. One sees here the still unsolved contradiction that dwells at the heart of the Socialist movement. Socialism, a creed which grew up in the industrialized Western countries, means better material conditions for the white proletariat; it also means liberation for the exploited colored peoples. But the two aims, at least temporarily, are incompatible. The leaders of the Socialist movement have never said this, or never said it loudly enough, and they are now paying for their timidity. Because the basic economic situation is not understood, hardships which are in fact unavoidable have the appearance of being due to the persistence of social inequality. The country houses and the smart hotels are still full of rich people, and it is tempting to imagine that if only they were wiped out there would be enough of everything for everybody. The fact that we are poorer than we were, that for a long time we shall go on being poorer, and that no redistribution of income can substantially alter this, is not clearly grasped, and morale suffers accordingly.

IT is a commonplace that the Labor government has failed badly in its publicity. There has been a good deal of exhortation, especially in the last few months, but the day-to-day process of telling the public what is happening, and why, has not been systematically undertaken, nor had the need for it been realized beforehand. It was typical of the government's way of doing things to let people imagine for a year or more that things were going fairly well, and then suddenly to plaster the walls with posters bearing the almost threatening slogan "Work or Want". The housing shortage, the fuel shortage, bread rationing, and Polish immigration have all caused more resentment than they need have done if the underlying facts had been properly explained. Nor has the government been very successful in "selling" Britain abroad, as one can see from the fact that we are execrated all over the world, to a great extent unjustly, for our actions in Palestine, while the enormously more important settlement with India passes almost unnoticed.

So far as publicity inside Britain is concerned, the government has two great difficulties to contend with. One is its lack of vehicles of expression. With the exception of a single daily paper, the *Herald*, all that matters of the British press is controlled either by Tories, or, in a very few cases, by left-wing factions not reliably sympathetic to a Labor government. The BBC on the other hand is a semi-autonomous corporation which is neutral in home politics and can only be used to a limited extent for official announcements. The other difficulty the government suffers from is that almost up to the moment of the general election it was in coalition with its opponents and therefore had no chance to make its own position clear.

Before the war, years of steady propaganda had won over to the Labor party the bulk of the manual workers and part of the middle class: but this was old-fashioned Socialist propaganda, largely irrelevant to a postwar world in which Britain is weakened and impoverished, Germany and Japan

prostrate, Russia in effect an enemy, and the United States an active world power. During the more desperate period of the war the Labor party was not in a position to declare an independent policy, though in my opinion it made a serious mistake in not getting out of the coalition as soon as it became clear that the war was won. Then came the general election, at extremely short notice. The Labor party went to the country, as it was bound to do in the circumstances, promising peace abroad and prosperity at home.

If it had been truthful it would have explained that there were very hard times ahead, all the harder because the first steps towards socialism now had to be taken, and that the ending of the hot war with the Axis merely meant the beginning of a cold war with the Soviet Union. To say, as every Labor candidate did, "A Labor government will get along better with Russia" was about equivalent to saying "A Protestant government will get along better with the Vatican." But the average voter did not grasp the fact, obvious since 1943, that Russia was hostile, nor the fact that Communism and Social Democracy are irreconcilable enemies; and meanwhile the election had to be won. The Labor party won it partly by irredeemable promises. It could hardly be blamed for doing this, but the confusion in the public mind between a Left policy and a pro-Russian policy had ugly possibilities, and it is owing to good luck rather than good management that they have not been realized. If the pro-Russian enthusiasm that grew up during the war had persisted, the spectacle of Britain engaging in a seemingly meaningless quarrel with the USSR, and keeping up large and expensive armed forces in consequence, might have split the Labor movement from top to bottom. For it could then have been plausibly said that our hardships were due to an anti-Communist policy forced upon us by America. This, of course, is what the Communists and crypto-Communists do say, but with less success than they might legitimately have

expected, because of the cooling-off of Russo-phile feeling. This cooling-off has not been due to Labor party propaganda but to the behavior of the Russian government itself. Of course there is always the possibility of a sudden revulsion in popular feeling if, for example, we appeared to be on the verge of war for some frivolous reason.

WITH all the difficulties that I have enumerated—the threatening and perhaps desperate economic situation, the tug-of-war between pre-election promises and essential reconstruction, the exhaustion and disappointment which express themselves in absenteeism and unjustified strikes, the resentment of small business men and middle-class people generally who are more and more fed up with controls and heavy taxation—in spite of all this, the government is still in a very strong position. The next general election is two years away, and before then something calamitous may happen, but given anything like a continuance of present conditions, I do not believe that the Labor party can be turned out of office. At present, although it has enemies, it has no ideological rival. There is only the Conservative party, which is bankrupt of ideas and can only squeal about grievances which are essentially middle-class or upper-class, and the opposition on the Left, the Communists and "cryptos" and the disgruntled Labor supporters who might follow them. These people have failed to bring about the split they were trying for, because they have identified themselves with a threatening foreign power, while in home affairs they have no program radically different from that of the Labor party itself.

One must remember that between them the Labor party and the Conservative party adequately represent the bulk of the population, and unless they disintegrate it is difficult for any other mass party to arise. The Communists are able to exert considerable influence by using "infiltration" methods, but in any open contest their position is hopeless, and that of the Fascist groups is even more so. Mosley is again active, and

anti-Semitism has increased over the past year or two, but the growth of a serious Fascist movement is not to be feared at present, because without the break-up of the old parties the potential membership for it does not exist. Electorally, it is only the Conservatives that the Labor party has to fear, and there is no sign that they are making much headway. It is true that they made large gains in the local-government elections, probably because people who do not as a rule bother to vote, especially women, wanted to register their exasperation with unpopular controls such as potato rationing. But in parliamentary by-elections the Labor party has not lost a single seat that it won in 1945; this is quite unprecedented for a party that has been in power for three years. The Conservatives could only win the next general election by swinging over both the "floating vote" (middle class and white-collar workers), and, in addition, the two million votes which were cast for the Liberals in 1945. The mass of the manual workers are not likely ever again to vote for the Conservative party, which is identified in their minds with class privilege and, above all, with unemployment.

IF THE Conservatives returned to power it would be a disaster, because they would have to follow much the same policy as a Labor government, but without possessing the confidence of the people who matter most. With Labor securely in power, perhaps for several successive terms, we have at least the chance of effecting the necessary changes peacefully. No doubt Britain will survive, at some level or another, in the sense that there will not actually be mass starvation; the question is whether we can survive as a democratic country with a certain decency of social atmosphere and political behavior. For a long time to come, unless there is breakdown and mass unemployment, the main problem will be to induce people to work harder; can we do it without forced labor, terrorism, and a secret police force? So far, in spite of the cries of agony from the Beaver-

brook press, the government has encroached very little upon individual liberty. It has barely used its powers, and has not indulged in anything that could reasonably be called political persecution. But then the decisive moment has not yet come.

Other countries, notably France, are in a position essentially similar to that of Britain, and perhaps the same problem faces all countries sooner or later. Left-wing governments only come to power in periods of calamity, and their first task is always to get more work out of exhausted and disappointed people. So far as Britain is concerned, all one can say is that the British people are very patient, very disciplined, and will put up with almost anything so long as they see a reason for it. The most urgent need is for the government to enter, more intelligently than it has done hitherto, upon the job of basic explanation, so that the average man, who endured the war in the vague hope that it would lead to something better, may understand *why* he has got to endure overwork and discomfort for years more, with no immediate recompense except an increase in social equality.

As yet, the advent of a Labor government has made no marked difference in the intellectual atmosphere of Britain, and it has affected the position of people in the liberal professions (other than doctors) less than it has affected business men and manual workers. The habitually discontented and mistrustful attitude of the left-wing intelligentsia has hardly been modified at all. The outlook of these people is adequately represented by the *New Statesman*, and perhaps also by *Tribune*, and by such publicists as Laski, Cole, and Crossman. All of them, of course, support the Labor party—some of them, indeed, are organizationally connected with it—but they always regard it with impatience, and they are usually in disagreement with its foreign policy. The fashionable attitude has always been to look on the Labor party as a machine which will not move faster than it is pushed, and to suspect its leaders of wanting, not actually to sell out to the enemy, but to slow down the rate of change

and keep the social structure as nearly intact as possible. It is noticeable that people still habitually talk about "British imperialism" and "the British ruling class" as though nothing had happened, and with the apparent implication that Churchill and Company are still in some way ruling the country. A symptom of the Labor party's low prestige is the fact that there is not a weekly or monthly paper of standing which is a reliable supporter of the government.

To account for this attitude, and its failure to change when Labor came to power, one has to remember several things. One is the sell-out of Macdonald and his group in 1931, which left behind it a sort of traumatic shock and a half-conscious feeling that a Labor government is of its nature weak and potentially treacherous. Another is the fact that the Labor party is essentially a working-class party, the organ of the unionized industrial workers, while the theoreticians of Socialism are mostly middle-class. The Labor party has a policy, but has no clearcut ideology which can compete with Marxism. It exists primarily to win better conditions for the wage-earners, and at the same time it has an ethical, quasi-religious tradition, deriving ultimately from evangelical Protestantism and not acceptable to middle-class intellectuals who have been subjected to Continental influences. The difference of outlook is generally sharpest over things happening outside Britain. In the years before the war it was, with few exceptions, only the middle-class supporters of the Labor party who were interested in the struggle against fascism abroad, and there is a similar division over Palestine now. The workers, in so far as they bother about the matter at all, are not anti-Bevin on the Palestine issue, whereas nearly all left-wing intellectuals are violently so. This is less a difference of policy than of subjective feeling. Few people could tell you what our Palestine policy is or was (assuming that we ever had one), and fewer still could tell you what it ought to be. But the reaction to the plight of the Jewish DP's, to the achievements of the Zionist settlers, and perhaps also to the spectacle of British

soldiers being blown up by terrorists, varies according to class background.

DURING and since the war there has appeared a new generation of intellectuals whose more vocal members are anti-Socialist in outlook—or, at any rate, are opposed to centralism, planning, direction of labor, and compulsory military service, and, in general, to the interference of the state with the individual. This outlook expresses itself in movements variously called anarchism, pacifism, and personalism; there are also the minor nationalist movements (Welsh and Scottish), which have gained ground in recent years and which have the same anti-centralist tendency. Most younger writers seem to have hostility to the government, which they accuse almost in the same breath of being reactionary and *dirigiste*.

There has been considerable outcry about the waning of intellectual liberty and the tendency of writers, artists, and scientists to degenerate into official hacks. This is partly justified, but the blame does not lie with the Labor party. What has happened is that for about a dozen years past the economic status of writers, if not of all artists, has been deteriorating, and they have had to look more and more to the state and to semi-official bodies such as the BBC to give them a livelihood. The war accelerated the process, and the present government has merely carried on a tradition which it inherited from its predecessor. The Labor party does not, as such, have any literary or artistic policy. It is headed by practical men who are not much inclined either to befriend the artist or to "coordinate" him in the totalitarian fashion. The recent tightening-up of employment regulations does contain a potential threat to all intellectuals, because it makes it possible, in theory, to classify any unsuccessful writer or artist as a non-worker and direct him into "gainful employment." However, this does not happen in practice. The right to starve, so important to those who genuinely care about literature or the arts, seems to be almost as well guaranteed as it was under pure capitalism.

EPILOGUE TO THE BOOK OF JOB

RALPH DE TOLEDANO

*fac eas Domine de morte transire
ad vitam quam olim Abrahæ promisisti,
et semini ejus. (Make them, Lord, pass
beyond death to the life you promised
of old to Abraham and his seed.)*

Now Job—behold him ragged of soul
and brittle in the arteries—stood
before the opaque of his window
tense for the striking hour, uncaring
for the book of days upon his desk,
with all notations made for yesterday,
today, tomorrow, or granting it, eternity.

Job heard no requiem for glory
past or still to be, saw no sunset
as the broken light caught the dust
that hung distended in the air.
After the bells had signalled,
Job would gather up his bones
into the tentative shroud of coat
and push them to that cube of floor
and wall and ceiling he called a home.

Yet in his guarded movement through
the fever of spontaneous streets, Job
still felt the twitch of glands
raddled but still tenacious,
clutching desire, clothed in the brash
of youth—and limbering beauty
made spasms in his veins,
at his nerve-ends music.

*The tattered song of men
who miss the boat to death—
the casuals of senescence—
is not unlike the muddied
vinegar of spoiled wine.*

*And revery second-hand
a corruscated sludge
when the shining metal
has been poured into
a mold now forgotten.*

*Rust is the payoff,
a rusty song played
on a rusty hinge,
a rusty gate
to an empty house.*

*If pity knows this song
tragedy laughs; comedy
blows its putty nose.*

Job can sing at evening
breaking a path to his room
through the glimmer of the city,
taking his song to his room
like mist on a platter, borne
aloft in ceremony via sharp stairs
and contemplated behind a locked door.

In darkness, before the single bulb
has cast its opulence upon a cot,
a chair, a bureau, and a length of rug,
Job shreds the tissue of his song,
retiring awkwardly to still-death.

The ledger on his desk is shut
by muttering chars who see it
for obstruction to a dust-broom, not
as the meticulous record of something
grotesquely turned to nothing.
And Job is translated into bride
of Christ, laying mortality neatly
upon the bed, while spirit capers,
a Tinker Bell at ninety

The flesh lying in state upon a cot
has its own memories, parsing the past;
the spirit perched on this wretched cornice
whispers a song from Aretino.

Now street lights hang patterns
on his wall, and in his clothes
Job Thanatos sleeps and mutters,
simulates a mummy with the mange.

*Stupid, miserable Job, where
is the holiness that made you, where
the choking stillness exploding into
melody?
Is it a gust among the towers, sighing?*

*Spacious and most holy, do not say:
Job, return to the dung-heap.
O do not say at all.*

Sleeping in sackcloth, Job
blasphemes himself before his god,
shoveling ashes, till earth revolves,
and terror-drenched the sun returns.

The ledger on the desk blows open,
pavilion for dancing mice
whose waltzing feet obliterate

what Job's waning hand inscribed
by day, the secret, unuttered
tetragrammaton of maculate deception.

Sing, trumpet, quietly,
and meditate the lost of heart,
the tired in the brain,
reflective of foot.
Play, trumpet, let vibrato sing
the bursting cadenza, the tension
pocketed, felt in the hand,
caught by the rustling clarinets.

Let lip explain
what stifles in the conscience,
nerve against blood,
tears assaulting pattern.
Breathe out through twisted brass
the hesitant command to men
who live and stir and fade away.

*Sing sadly, trumpet,
in the dark night mournfully.
Job will not die.*

RALPH DE TOLEDANO's poetry and articles have appeared in *Poetry*, *American Mercury*, *New Leader*, *Plain Talk*, and a number of other publications. He is the editor of *Frontiers of Jazz*, a critical anthology published by Oliver Durrell in 1947. The poem published here is part of an extended episodic work in verse, another section of which, "Prologue to the Book of Jesse," appeared in the *Standard*. Mr. de Toledano was born in 1916, in the International Zone of Tangier.

THE POETRY OF SAMUEL GREENBERG

"Neither the Time nor the Poet Was Ripe"

MILTON KLONSKY

FOR the tragic life of this poet, clipped at the age of twenty-three, an apology is required—but from whom? Who is to blame? "God's only excuse," said Nietzsche, "is that he doesn't exist"—but since when is that an excuse? Job, who knew all His historical sleights of hand and philosophical disappearing acts, would never have accepted such an apology. And anyhow, since the Court of Highest Appeal is forever adjourned, Sing O Muse and adjust the fate of Samuel, Jacob and Hannah Slimovitch's son, driven by the flood of history from Vienna to imperial New York, where, as a child of nine, he burrowed with his family in the slums of the East Side, played hopscotch and stickball in the streets, read Horatio Alger, the pulps and the comics, went to PS 160 on Suffolk Street, but had to leave in the seventh grade to work in a luggage factory, contracted tuberculosis, wrote his poetry in the dead calm between fits of madness, and died in a Staten Island charity ward in 1917 at the age of twenty-three.

Greenberg left more than six hundred poems, scribbled on the backs of calendar sheets, envelopes, postcards, in nickel notebooks, etc., which were regarded by his family and even by the author himself, in his words, as "nonsense to real literature of careful judgment" (Greenberg's *Autobiography*).

SAMUEL GREENBERG, the poet whose life and creative work MILTON KLONSKY writes about here, was previously considered of interest only for his influence on the poetry of Hart Crane. But a closer analysis of Greenberg's work reveals an extraordinary talent which can stand on its own. Mr. Klonsky has contributed poems, articles, and reviews to various literary magazines. He was born in Staten Island in 1921, and attended Brooklyn College and Columbia College.

After his death, the whole mass was given to a friend, William Murrell Fisher, who preserved them curiously for years. But then, by chance, the young Hart Crane saw some of these poems at Fisher's house in Woodstock, N. Y., and was so struck by the power of their rhetoric—much like his own, as though Greenberg had taken the words out of his mouth—that, fortunately, the greater poet took them back and condescended to plagiarize, without which service who would have heard of Samuel Greenberg? The sudden evaporation of promising talent, leaving only the waste in the melting pot, is one of the sad characteristics of American culture.

GREENBERG's life as an "apartment Jew" was spent at the height of the exodus from Eastern Europe, a turbulent period, when shipload after shipload of immigrants were landed on Manhattan like an invasion army, and the downtown bridgehead teemed with our own foreign faces and foreign languages, strange food smells, beards, *yarmulkas*, gabardines. Yet this experience, which formed his sensibility, left no impression upon the actual stuff of his work. At the time Greenberg wrote, the attempt of the Imagists to appropriate small tough lumps of the daily life for poetry was unknown to him, and even if known would not have been understood. His sense of the contemporary life was weak. As a result, Greenberg's diction is often pseudo-literary, filled with the outworn poeticisms of another age and irradiated only by his own fever.

But even if Greenberg, with his undeveloped technique, could never propound the City, the City itself (metaphorically speaking) spoke through him, in tongues, a kind of Delphic gibberish of imagery.

He was a New York poet—the pastoral scenery of his poems has the depth of vaudeville flats. It is not only his high metaphysical voice, however, or the cinematic flow of images, the speed of his imagination to catch swift ideas and feelings on the fly, that makes Greenberg, I think, the ancestor of an as yet unrealized Big Town style. There is also a curious Chinese-box effect of “in-wit” in some of his poems (which we shall examine later on), interiors of the mind enclosed in themselves. The intellectual toughness of the City and its irony—billiard “english”—are lacking; yet no one would expect a poetical *naif* like Greenberg to think out of the side of his mouth.

In applying such an interpretation to the poems, it is true that we look for what we want to find; as James Joyce remarked, we wipe our glosses with what we know. According to the predisposition of his critics, Greenberg has been claimed as a surrealist, a primitive, a neo-Romantic, etc. But, in the end, the poet himself is responsible for that. The almost sibylline unconsciousness in which he wrote his poems tempts us to impose our own categories upon them.

GREENBERG's most ambitious work is “Sonnets of Apology,” a group of poems written during his last months in a tubercular ward when the visions of fever became confused with the appearance of things as they are.

. . . the beam
Of fire from the sun cast mine own
To slumber in imagination of spheres.
Under the heavens of moon-like shapes
Mine eyelids shut; I fell into unfelt realms.
(from “Enigmas”)

In his charge, the rational outline of the sonnet form based on the medieval syllogism, with its statement, counter-statement, and resolution, now bulges with disfigured images packed to fit the required fourteen lines. Even with the original shock of these poems absorbed for us by Hart Crane, still we are not prepared for this. The main in-

fluences, Shelley, perhaps Blake, certainly Emerson, and those poets of the Romantic movement included in Palgrave's *Golden Treasury* and the back of Greenberg's grade-school reader, these are undigested. As a result Greenberg's poems are loaded with Romantic apparatus: clouds, blood, death, stars; sudden apostrophes to Platonic abstractions; and the characteristic amputations and contractions of “'pon,” “'pelling,” “'frain,” “o'er,” “e'er,” etc.—even without the excuse of metrical exigency.

Despite the great rise of some lines and passages and even whole poems, the nose sniffs—gas or pneuma, the true afflatus or flatulence merely? Greenberg's language strains under a weight of meaning it can hardly bear, both because his technical control was slight and the gravity of his experience too heavy; so that, frequently, his words drop their burden of significance altogether and float off like runaway balloons, in a Shelleyan *extase*, pinnacled dim in the intense inane. The opening lines of “Man” are typical.

*O perfect lay of deity's crested herb
Thou art as the winsome seed afloat.
Whose power e'en fear doth warmly note
Upon the slave of mortal earth to curb. . . .*

Paradoxically, it was the cramp of Greenberg's limited vocabulary on his ideas—“rather poor in careful selection and of grammatical assistance unguided”—which forced him to invent new words and constructions, and, sometimes, to charge verbs and epithets with an intense focal brilliance: “Mythology helped the modern life *upbraid*”; “Thou hast in plea Mankind's thirsty juggle, to *upheave* its concept”; “Doubting conscience's concentration and *behave*”; “The orator follows the universe/ And *refrains* the laws of the people,” etc. Artistic limitations, when they are understood, not only prevent but inform.

A CLOSE reading of Emerson gave him his bias, his cue, and even a degree of control. Emerson's gnomic style is pounded by Greenberg into flat declaratives, and used

to anchor his own Transcendentalism, but a naive version, sometimes almost ludicrous, as in these lines from "To Darwin": "And within the oversouled hush/ I breathed the prayer, reliance." Greenberg's use of universal titles—"Peace," "Life," "Force," etc.—which serve as neo-Platonic essences or forms for the poems and so predicate their contents, was also derived from Emerson.

What attracted him to the Transcendental philosophy with its sharp Kantian disjunction of existence and essence, image and reality, good and evil, was precisely this cleavage. Greenberg was in love with the dualities, the master symbol of Yin and Yang.

*The great color and sacred Mary
Were whirled in the eyes of Venus and Mars,
But the large sun-circle kept on
With the moon-disk and stars.*

(from "Thus Slave Through Nature")

His own consumptive fever, which cast him intermittently from the apparently real world to the truly unreal, must have seemed like a symptom of this basic metaphysical duality.

But whether he understood its implications or not, Greenberg left Emersonianism at a crucial point. The passage from "Enigmas" already quoted ("the beam/ Of fire from the sun cast mine own/ To slumber in imagination of spheres. . .") contains a notion of insight, the mind's internal beam, as the moon of reality *reflecting* the true light of day—in distinction from the Emerson-Kant view of the mind as imposing its own categories on nature. It may be reckless to try to piece out a consistent philosophy with quotations from a poet often confused and contradictory (or from any other poet), but I think this does show Greenberg's adherence to a Biblical naturalism, which presupposes a gap between the intelligences, but not the universe, of God and man. Without the acceptance of this gap—and the possibility of a prophetic leap across—mysticism is disqualified.

Throughout his poems, Greenberg refers to the senses as "bubbles" that can pop at

any moment: "the bubble of senses bright," "eye bubbles dissolving water shade," and in one of his best poems, "The Glass Bubbles," the frailty of sight is metaphorically identified with the frailty of what is seen.

*The motion of gathering loops of water
Must either burst or remain in a moment.
The violet colors through the glass
Throw up little swellings that appear
And spatter as soon as another strikes
And is born; so pure are they of colored
Hues, that we feel the absent strength
Of its power. When they begin they gather
Like sand on the beach: each bubble
Contains a complete eye of water.*

The modulations of metaphor here are extraordinary in a poet who never read Donne or Marvell. First, the bubble-images are thrown up by a spout of vision-water, and "spatter" as others strike and are born; as they break they dissolve into hues of color without substance (like an after-image) so pure "we feel the absent strength of its power"; until, finally, the terms of the metaphor are identified and the eye-spout and its image-bubbles contain one another. The gritty hardness of the image of sand—"When they begin they gather/ Like sand on the beach"—is thrown into our eyes just as the transformation takes place. Figuratively speaking, the whole poem is a metaphysical wink of the inner eye that transcends appearance.

BUT even the possibility of such a transcendence in poetry—"the weaving fictions of chromatic truth"—serves only to confirm the gulf between sensory perception and the reality. This theme is further rehearsed in "The Master's Triumph," with its powerful cadence reminiscent of the later Blake.

*Behold all this jagged beauty; I bare the test
alone of perfection too imperfect.
The choir spirit in order weaves it own
gauge in the song of life.
O detail! must thou trail endless, as fables
of yore forever create*

*Harmonies, while we breathe broad and
simple? We pray to this
Abandoned universe; that critic looms high
in chaos, whether it contains
Sensual or divine restriction. . . . Or perhaps
the infinite charm is cursed.*

No matter how God-like in this "abandoned universe" the act of creation may be, the poet's task is not redemption but to deliver himself from the necessity of having to be redeemed.

*He sat as an extricable prisoner, bound
To essence that he sought to emancipate.*
(from "Poets")

Or, as he says elsewhere, following Emerson: "The essence of life remains a screen"—an essence which is not screened by anything else, but is a screen, a screen that screens itself. The "within the within" noumenal character of reality is mirrored by Greenberg's image (or the other way around), thereby exemplifying in itself what it asserts. One of the lines Hart Crane appropriated from Greenberg for his own poem, "Emblems of Conduct," was of this sort: "For joy *hides* its stupendous coverings." But Crane, exercising his *droit de seigneur*, misread or deliberately transformed the line to "For joy *rides* in tremendous coverings," and so spilled its meaning.

"Emblems of Conduct" was composed by Crane out of a congeries of lines taken from five unrelated poems of Greenberg: "Daylight," "The Laureate," "Perusal," "Immortality," and, of course, "Conduct," from which it originated. The result was only a crude amalgam, lacking the spontaneity and dramatic tensions of the original. Here is Greenberg's "Conduct," another of the "in-witted" poems where his images have a Realist autonomy and follow their own leads:

*By a peninsula the painter sat and
Sketched the uneven valley groves.
The apostle gave alms to the
Meek. The volcano burst
In fusive sulphur and hurled*

*Rocks and ore into the air—
Heaven's sudden change at
The drawing tempestuous,
Darkening shade of dense clouded hues.
The wanderer soon chose
His spot of rest; they bore the
Chosen hero upon their shoulders,
Whom they strangely admired, as
The beach-tide summer of people desired.*

The vast landscape of volcanoes, valleys, and beaches is crowded into the small context of the poem, and even further diminished by the figure of the Titanic painter who sits "by a peninsula" to sketch the "valley groves." (Freudian criticism can make a fuss over the peninsula and the groves—as indeed the whole poem is symbolical of the act of creation.) A strange apostle gives alms to the meek, just as the painter gives form to what he sees. All nature is in a geological confusion like the first week in the book of Genesis or the painter's own mind. Abruptly, this identification of the creator and the object of creation is made explicit as the volcano bursts—"Heaven's sudden change at/ The drawing tempestuous/ Darkening shade of dense clouded hues." Then, just as suddenly, the painter resolves his confusion and finds a "spot of rest." His mental landscape becomes a summer beach, and here the artist-hero is acclaimed and borne upon the shoulders of the crowd.

CRANE sometimes incorporated Greenberg's imagery with a greater degree of flexibility than in "Emblems of Conduct." Philip Horton's biography of Crane contains an account of the change suffered by a line from Greenberg's "Shadowings" before it was finally annealed in the second part of "Voyages." "Silhouettes set the scepters roving" became, by stages: (1) "Shadowed sceptres roving"; (2) "Circled by sceptres roving"; (3) "Enlisted by what sceptres roving/ Wide from isle to isle have churned"; (4) and then, the form in which it was used: "The sceptred terror of whose sessions rends. . . ." (At this point Crane interpolated a line from Greenberg's "Man"—"All else

than Deities green crested herb"—which he later removed.) The final version reads:

*The sceptred terror of whose sessions rends
All but the pieties of lovers' hands.*

Contrasted with the molten issue of these lines, "Emblems of Conduct" is a slag-heap.

Crane's conscious attempt in "Emblems of Conduct" to impose a rational order on Greenberg's associational flow of imagery without first estimating its depth or current was a violation of his own theory of extralogical poetry. In an article published by Crane in 1925, two years after he had made copies of the Greenberg manuscripts, he wrote: "Via . . . their metaphorical interrelationships the entire construction of the poem is raised on the organic principle of a 'logic of metaphor' which antedates so-called pure logic and which is the genetic base of all speech, consciousness, and thought extension." But despite his prescriptive criticism, Crane was always ready to supply a rational gloss for his own poems, perhaps trying to join the two terms "logic of metaphor" and "so-called pure logic" not metaphorically but literally. Certainly as the subject of his own poetic analysis he associated the figures of logic and metaphor too freely; even his use of the term "logic"—in this connection deprived of any usual denotation—is purely metaphysical.

The method advocated by Crane, evidence of which he found in Greenberg's "Sonnets of Apology," was originally developed by Rimbaud and especially by Mallarmé in his later poems. The structural rigor of Mallarmé's work was, perhaps, an attempt to make his poems self-sufficient and autotelic in a time of chaotic cultural values—"Monads have no windows." By omitting the social connections of syntax, the symbols and metaphors of poetry (like the symbols of a dream) attain their relevance to one another and to the world only within the formal context of the poem itself. The vision of the poet can be made manifest by being filtered through a significant form—for without this objective technical correlative for his vision his

symbols are merely spots before our eyes. As William Blake pointed out: "The artist's conception is as his execution and no better."

An architecture of metaphor was never achieved by Crane, and never attempted by Greenberg. Greenberg's ultimate failure—and Crane's to a lesser extent, as his ambitions were greater—was due to the lack of such a controlling technique.

The affinity of both poets is clear—New York. Crane's talent was magnetized by New York, and in the "Proem" and "The Tunnel" sections of *The Bridge*, as well as in "For the Marriage of Helen and Faustus," he found his pole. Although these poems absorb without self-consciousness the artifacts of the machine age, they avoid the lumpish naturalism of early free verse—Whitehead's "fallacy of misplaced concreteness" in poetical guise—and the style Crane wrought instead with its slang, thick *impasto* of diction, high tonal pitch curved on the inside, elliptic shifts of reference, etc., was considerably more flexible. Greenberg, on the other hand, had none of this literary sophistication. He had only a sensibility formed in the streets, but, in expressing himself, he unconsciously anticipated and sometimes even surpassed the art of Crane. With his technical handicap he could never sustain a unified vision, and, in the end, fragments are his whole achievement.

GREENBERG's life and his work were cut too soon, with all the dangerous (for us) pathos and sentimentality of ruins, shards of poetry that "crumble within view and palm." Neither the time nor the poet was ripe. The immigrant culture of the East Side was then still more European than American, and the effort of adjustment from the crawling villages of Eastern Europe to the pace of a 20th-century megalopolis, the cockpit of mankind, engrossed every other concern. This Greenberg saw clearly.

*I live in an age where the age lives alone
And lonesome doth it rage
Where the bard dare not come.*

(from "The Tempest")

His freak genius was the product of his struggle to achieve personal authenticity, a "self gathering of natural prevention in the ways of life's action," while still assimilating to the new American life. His problem in poetry, like that of assimilation in general, was enormous, Hamlet's problem: To be or not to be—what? For it is much more painful to live without one's self than to live as a pariah, without society; just as it is better to be in exile than to be dead. The symptoms of the afflictions which led to Greenberg's death—his schizophrenic madness and the tubercular shredding of his lungs, the source of inspiration—were true symbols of a greater social disorder. We wheeze in spirit. And the elastic of self-alienation has already been stretched so far that all are in danger of being struck down by it, as by a sudden snap of the mind.

What is supposed to be the last poem Greenberg wrote, found on the back of a postcard addressed to his brother and dated March 14, 1917, is composed in tight and regular stanzas, unlike "Sonnets of Apology."

The advantages of such a strict order, where the slightest shift of meaning or value can be made emphatic, is obvious for a dis-

oriented poet like Greenberg. And yet pattern is not form, as conformity is not style. Despite the superb finish and pure tone of this poem, it is Greenberg's sprawling "Sonnets," with their rank tropical overgrowth, gorgeous and grotesque, which are much closer to his own nature.

Here is "To Dear Daniel," which comes almost as a summation of Greenberg's life.

*There is a loud noise of Death
Where I lay;
There is a loud noise of life
Far away.*

*From low and weary stride
Have I flown;
From low and weary pride
I have grown.*

*What does it matter now
To you or me?
What does it matter now
To whom it be?*

*Again the stain has come
To me;
Again the stain has come
For thee.*

FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

UTOPIA ON COLUMBIA STREET

There Were Giants in Those Days

S. L. BLUMENSON

HERRICK'S CAFE—then situated on Division Street at the junction of Canal and East Broadway—was, in the last days of the 19th and the early years of the 20th centuries, the gathering place of the East Side “intelligentsia” and literati. There the various factions—and they were legion—and the fractions of factions, met nightly at the round tables with their red and black checkered cloths, smoked Russian cigarettes, downed oceans of Chinese tea, and consumed pounds of Hungarian strudel. With loud argument each one tried to outshout the other, and by strenuous gesticulation they strove to settle the political and economic evils of the world, each in his own way.

IN THE long history of human efforts to improve the various “systems” by which men have distributed the wealth of the world, the establishment of the curious project on Columbia Street in New York City, described here, may be no more than a footnote. But, as one of its sponsors pointed out at the time, it is necessary to start somewhere; and if it was finally unsuccessful, at least it could be said that it did far less harm than certain other great economic experiments. S. L. BLUMENSON, who here tells the story of this early effort to alleviate the injustices of capitalism, was born in Minsk, Russia, and came to this country fifty-five years ago, as a child. He grew up in New York's lower East Side and moved to California in 1935; at present he is connected with a steel company in Richmond, California. Mr. Blumenson has published a number of short stories dealing with Jewish life both in Europe and the United States.

It was into this atmosphere of smoke and general discord that the young lawyer timidly entered. A recent graduate of night law school, and broke, he was making the rounds of *landsman* associations and Jewish labor unions, seeking clients. Seeing three individuals at one of the tables arguing loudly, he went over and meekly inquired if they needed a lawyer.

The three stopped arguing, and one of them said, “A lawyer? What do we need a lawyer for? We have nothing against each other.”

“All right,” said the lawyer, “so I will draw a release for you.”

He would do much better, he was told, if he would draw up a chair and join them, which offer he accepted without taking any exception. After asking his preference, they ordered a cup of coffee in a glass and a piece of strudel, and then resumed the argument.

One of the three disputants at the table was my Uncle Morris; of the other two, one was his cousin Shloimo and the other his *landsman* Philip Barse.

MY UNCLE MORRIS, who had attended the Volozhiner Yeshiva in the old country, was something of a scholar. In New York he worked as a frontmaker in a shirt shop. Shirtmaking, in those days, was considered the trade for the intellectual elite, since shirts were manufactured in sections, and the work was easy to learn. He was a tall, thin man with a long drooping mustache; a freethinker all year but a devout worshipper on Rosh Hashana and

Yom Kippur. He had a high forehead, pale grey eyes, and wore a pearl derby always a half size too small for his head. He was a social democrat and wore a button flaunting the bewhiskered image of Karl Marx on the lapel of his coat. On his vest he wore a button showing the face of Baron de Hirsch, the French Jewish philanthropist who had financed the Jewish colonies in the Argentine. This button implied that in addition to being a social democrat of the Bebel faction, he was also an anti-Chovevei Zionist, one who believed that the solution of the Jewish question was in settlements on the land and not in Palestine. My uncle took pride in the fact that, due to the similarity of their drooping half-crescent mustaches, he bore a strong resemblance to the Baron.

To the habitués of Herrick's Cafe my uncle was known as *Genosse* Morris. All East Side intellectuals of those days addressed each other with the title of *Genosse*, the German word for colleague. *Genosse* Uncle Morris, who later in life became a well known shirt manufacturer and all his business life battled the shirt-makers union, and who left a fine business, a country house in the Catskills, and a mansion in Florida, was looked upon in those days as a leader in the coming world revolution. He died a registered Republican, and a contributor to the party's war chest.

Shloimo had been apprenticed to a tailor in the old country and arrived in the promised land with a trade. He found work immediately in a sweat shop operated by a *landsman*, making men's suits. *Genosse* Shloimo wore the face of Ferdinand Lassalle on the lapel of his coat, and the face of Moses Montefiore, with the inscription "think and thank," on his vest. Moses Montefiore was the great Anglo-Jewish philanthropist who, with the Rothschilds, financed the pioneer settlements in Palestine. It was obvious, then, that *Genosse* Shloimo was an ardent Chovevei Zionist who believed that the salvation of the Jews was in Palestine. When he passed on to his fathers, he left a nation-wide chain of clothing stores.

Philip Barse, whom everyone called respectfully Mr. Barse, had been a *prikashick*, a salesman, in the old country, and took to selling in America like a duck to water. He sold sewing machines to the newly ar-

rived immigrants and also peddled pianos as a side line; pianos were sold two dollars down and fifty cents a week. Mr. Barse was most likely responsible for half the pianos which cluttered up the "parlors" on the East Side.

Genosse Mr. Barse was of a different school altogether from his two colleagues. He was a *friedlicher anarchist*, a peaceful anarchist, who contributed to the support of the *Freie Arbeiter Stimme*, an "anarchist" weekly whose editor was the mildest, meekest and most peaceful man in the world, by the name of Yanovsky. *Genosse* Mr. Barse wore the picture of Count Leo Tolstoy on his lapel, and that of Mr. Jacob Schiff on his vest. From this it might have been surmised (correctly) that *Genosse* Mr. Barse ardently believed that the solution of the Jewish question lay in America. Although, theoretically, all anarchists are supposed to be atheists, *Genosse* Mr. Barse was also one of the ushers in the Henry Street Synagogue. As a prosperous businessman, he wore a frock coat with satin lapels, striped grey trousers, a brocaded white vest, patent leather shoes—the button kind, topped by white spats. On week days he wore a somber black derby; on Friday night and Saturday, a *tzillinder*, a shiny silk high hat.

WHEN my uncle, *Genosse* Morris, arrived in this country, he was just nineteen years old. That same night he began to tell the assembled *landsleit*, who had come to greet him at my father's house, what the trouble was with the world and with America, and what ought to be done about it. My father, who was a cantor, listened to him gravely, and finally said, "Moishe, do you want to do an older brother a favor? *Fix mir nicht dus land* (don't fix the country for me)."

The following evening, under the sponsorship of *Genosse* Shloimo and *Genosse* Mr. Barse, Uncle Morris was initiated into the night life of Herrick's Cafe, and accepted into the inner circle as a valued *Genosse* of great promise to the world revolution. Nightly the three gathered at the tea tables and discussed and argued the various "isms" of that day. While all agreed on basic principles, each differed with all the rest as to the "tactics" and means of bringing

about the world revolution. They called each other *naar*, *dumkopf*, and *meshugener*; bandied about the names of Marx and Lassalle, Tolstoy, Bakunin, Kropotkin, Bebel, Singer. Of Robert Owen and John Stuart Mill they had never heard. My father used to say after listening to their arguments: "Talk, talk, talk," and he would repeat to them an old Russian saying, "*Ya kazalla, ti kazalla, meh-h-h-h*," which means, "I am a goat, you are a goat, meh-h-h-h."

IT was the young lawyer with the practical mind and the need of a few dollars who stirred them to action.

"What," said he, "is the good of all your talk, and the talk of all the Genossen here, if nothing is done to bring about the new economic system? Why don't you at least start something moving, instead of just talking and disagreeing and drinking tea?"

My uncle, Genosse Morris, looked at the young lawyer with new sight, and said, "A man after my own heart; a man of action; just what the revolution needs. A Danton, a Robespierre, a Marat. All we do night after night is repeat the same formula, the same words: 'The social-economic revolution cannot be attained until the concentrated might of the masses of all parties be united.' A United Front! And when can we unite them? When the Messiah will arrive. Even the three of us cannot agree."

Genosse Mr. Barse and Genosse Shloimo nodded approval. Other Genossen drifted over to the table. My uncle rose from his chair and addressed the assembly of Genossen around him: "The time for talk is past. Action—the time for action and sacrifice has arrived. *Es lebe de revelyutsye!* (Long live the revolution!)"

Genosse Mr. Barse shook the young lawyer's hand with deep emotion, and said, "God has sent you to us this night. We needed an awakening. You are quite sure you are not the Prophet Eliyahu? It is time we did start something. Why not a co-operative?"

And thus began the story of how Utopia came to Columbia Street.

OF COURSE it did not come all in one day. In a capitalist economy you have to have money to start anything. And will Wall Street give or lend money to an under-

taking which in time would blow it to Kingdom Come? The efforts of other Genossen had to be enlisted. And when you have fifteen or twenty associates—Marxists, Bakuninites, Kropotkinites, Tolstoyans, Social Democrats of the majority and the minority, socialists of the De Leon and Debs factions, Abraham Cahanites, Louis Millerites—not to mention two vegetarians, one physical culturist, and one nudist—all mortal political enemies, you cannot expect them to agree in one evening or even in a few months.

However, the young lawyer, as everyone knew, was neutral, he himself being, for business reasons, a member of the John F. Ahearn Tammany Club. And so everyone trusted him. In fact, after wrangling for weeks over the election of a treasurer, the young lawyer was elected to that office, and had in his possession the funds for the enterprise which would set off the world revolution. They even voted him five dollars a month for his trouble. When they couldn't agree on the type of the enterprise, one faction demanding a co-operative hat store, another a co-operative farm, and a third a co-operative clothing factory, the young lawyer reminded them that the enterprise would have to be limited to the funds on hand, namely one hundred and seventeen dollars, which was shrinking by five dollars a month while they wrangled.

Here Genosse Mr. Barse came up with a suggestion. Not only was it the duty of the members to start the holy enterprise which in time would bring about world revolution, it was also their duty to start one that would alleviate the hardships of the exploited masses. What is there of greater need to the suffering masses in the hot and damp and stuffy tenements than a cold drink? Why not start a co-operative soda fountain?

Most of the members were impressed. After all, Genosse Mr. Barse was a successful business man; not an exploiter, but one who worked for himself, and for the Cause. So, after many meetings and speeches and arguments, and the withdrawal of the hat-store faction, Genosse Mr. Barse was instructed to find a suitable corner for a soda-water stand. The young lawyer promised to obtain the necessary permits; he knew every alderman on the East Side intimately.

THERE was on the corner of Columbia and Stanton Streets, in the midst of the Galician and Hungarian section of the lower East Side, a soda stand flanked by a fruit stand. The owner was a sickly young man who had a wife and two children to help him out. The stands stayed open from six AM to midnight, seven days a week. In the summer the proprietors might have eked out a poor living had it not been for the police department. As it happened this corner was the junction of two police beats, and four policemen a day helped themselves to the apples, pears, and bananas, as well as other tempting seasonal fruits.

On his doctor's advice, the young man decided to sell his stand and get work in the Catskills waiting on tables, making beds, and doing general chores. He had a brother-in-law, a *Litvak* and an ardent Genosse, who tipped off Genosse Mr. Barse to the bargain. Genosse Mr. Barse, with great business acumen, pointed out that there could be no doubt of success: Galician and Hungarian housewives were notorious for their highly seasoned, spicy, and peppery foods. After some shrewd trading the deal was made.

A glass of soda water, in those days, sold for one penny. It consisted of a small amount of flavored syrup topped by highly charged cold seltzer and a final fizz. The most popular flavors were chocolate, vanilla, strawberry, raspberry, lemon, violet, and mint; all were displayed in colored bottles. Of course, for two cents one could get more syrup and a somewhat larger glass, but such prosperous customers were few and far between.

The coming of Utopia to Columbia Street raised quite a furor on the East Side. The orthodox *Tageblatt* ridiculed the idea, and accused the founders of being nihilists; one result of this was that the editor of the *Tageblatt* had work for glaziers the following morning. The *Abendblatt*, the voice of the revolution, headlined the undertaking as the beginning of the end for the capitalist system. "At last," wrote the editor in a flaming editorial, "the workers are beginning to throw off their chains; they have a world to gain, and nothing to lose. Long live the Genossen of the East Side who are setting an example to the workers of the world," and it finished with a hope

that the workers would know how to support the sacred enterprise.

The English press was totally unaware of the calamity facing the capitalist system. The East Side tipsters who kept the English language press informed of doings on the East Side looked upon the Genossen as crackpots and their doings as of no news value. And so there were no editorial denunciations, and the capitalist lords continued to live in a fool's paradise.

THE dedication of the cooperative soda-water stand and its adjoining fruit stand was set for May first, the international workers' holiday. Delegations came from East Side labor unions, fraternal orders, and *landsman* organizations, representing all factions, and all bedecked with red sashes and large gold badges stamped with the word "delegate" in red letters. A permit for the parade was obtained from the police department, and the police precinct-house assigned three special policemen to head the parade and keep the peace.

As usual, the parade formed on Rutgers Square. My uncle, Genosse Morris, acted as grand marshal, and sat astride a horse at the head of the parade, right opposite the waterless Schiff fountain. I recognized the horse as my friend Mike, who pulled the ice and coal wagon belonging to the Monroe Ice and Coal Company, I. Moskovits Prop. Mike was so broad across the beam that my uncle, Genosse Morris, fairly did a "split" in the best circus manner on Mike's back. He wore a wide red satin sash across shoulder and chest, a large tasselled badge, and a cockade, tricornered and red-feathered, on his head. The Jewish Musicians' Union turned out in force—brass, drums, and fifes—and they blared forth the Marseillaise (the Internationale had not as yet been composed).

At ten AM sharp, the band struck up officially. The three policemen, followed by the standard bearers, who were numerous because all organizations represented had their banners in line, headed the march. Following them were the musicians, and after them came my uncle, Genosse Morris, with feet at right angles to the back of Mike, the hardest working proletarian of them all. The parade circled and snaked through the narrow tenement-lined streets, with the win-

dows, roofs, fire escapes, and sidewalks crowded with cheering sight-seers, until it finally came to the corner which would, in time, be a shrine to the world revolution. There a committee awaited my uncle, Genosse Morris, and greeted him. He answered in kind, quoted the manifesto, thanked the contributors, and foretold many more and larger co-operative enterprises which would spring from the profits flowing from the soda fountain. He finished with a loud, and dramatic, "*Lang lebt de revelutsye!*"

The fountain from which the revenues for world revolution would flow stood there in all its glory. Draped in red gingham, bedecked with red ribbon and small red, white, and blue flags; its nickel-plated gadgets agleam in the midday sun; colored bottles arranged according to the colors of the rainbow; the fruit on the adjoining stand polished and fresh (the work of the ladies auxiliary).

WHEN the speeches were over and the crowd began to thin, my uncle, Genosse Morris, with the help of the members of the welcoming committee, dismounted from his perch. For a time he had to be held up until the circulation in his legs returned to normal. Then he shed his marshal's insignia, took off his coat, rolled up his sleeves, donned a white apron and a chef's white cap, and went behind the soda counter to smile at his first customer.

She was a wrinkled old lady with a *sheitel* beneath a head shawl, and a practiced shopper. After all, one does not simply slap down a penny and say "Give me a drink"! Before placing her order she had to have information as to the number of flavors to select from, and she needed time to choose.

"Choklot you got?" inquired the old lady.

"And why not?" answered my uncle in his usual manner.

"Und skrawberry you got?" queried the customer.

"A question," smiled my uncle good humoredly.

"Und rettsberry, und lemon, und violet you got?" further quizzed the old lady.

"We have all flavors," answered my uncle less patiently. "And which would you select?"

The first customer considered a while, eyeing the syrup bottles, and then said, "Gib me for a penny mix."

Even my uncle, Genosse Morris, famous for his calm and patience, lost his professional courtesy. "Missus, and maybe you would like a piece of sponge cake too?"

The old lady knew no *chachmes* (wise cracks). "If it is kosher cake," said she, "please wrap it up and I will take it home to my grandson."

THROUGHOUT all his long life, my uncle, Genosse Morris, contended that the failure of the sacred enterprise was due to the two mortal enemies of world revolution: lawyers and the police. On the opening day the seven policemen, four regulars and three special, practically ate all the fruit between them, and later they became a permanent drain on the profits. And the young lawyer insisted on the payment of his fees, so that the profits which should have gone to finance world revolution went, instead, to support its strongest opponents.

Although, in time, the young lawyer handled the legal business of my uncle, Genosse Morris, and that of Genosse Shlomo and Genosse Mr. Barse (who became one of the largest distributors of pianos and radios in the country), and received fees from them, running into tens of thousands, to the end of their days they always reproached him for his greed.

But for the police my uncle had no reproaches. "In a capitalistic system," my capitalist uncle, at heart always Genosse Morris, used to say, "where even the police are exploited and underpaid, it is understandable that they should augment their low pay with fruit from stands."

Thus came and went, unheeded and unsung, Utopia on Columbia Street.

CEDARS OF LEBANON

HASIDIC TALES: SECOND PERIOD

A Selection

MARTIN BUBER

THE "second period" of Hasidism, whose *zaddikim* (literally, "righteous ones") came in the fourth and succeeding generations of the line that began with the Baal Shem Tov, produced the legends, tales, anecdotes, and sayings collected and edited by Martin Buber in the second volume of his *Tales of the Hasidim*, subtitled "The Later Masters." A selection from the previous volume, containing similar material from the first three generations of the *zaddik* line, was presented in our pages in January and February 1947. The second volume, like the first, is being published (later this month) by Schocken Books in a translation by Olga Marx, and it is by Schocken's permission that we print the selections below. (It should be noted that these selections to some extent obscure the character of Buber's book, which is so arranged as to give a picture of the historical development of Hasidism and the individual personalities of its leaders.)

In his introduction to the second volume, Dr. Buber writes: "There is no doubt that the crude power characteristic of the outset of Hasidism lessened during this second epoch, which mainly occupies the first half of the

nineteenth century, though certain of the exponents of Hasidism lived past that time. The main outlines of the first Hasidic tidings and struggles become complicated or blurred, and the sacred passion to bring heaven and earth closer to each other often gives place to the kind of organized religiosity we can trace in every great religious movement which persists past the generations of awakening and revolt. But at the same time comes a variety and abundance of new spiritual life which does not, it is true, deepen the basic ideas of Hasidism in any essential respect, but does expand the province in which these ideas can be realized and applies them to the problems of everyday life to a far greater extent than before. The form in which these ideas are expressed has less elemental vigor but often more brilliance. Aphorisms, parables, and symbolic fairy tales, which up to that time occurred only as the naive, witty, but unfinished improvisations of genius, achieve literary perfection."

For some biographical facts about Dr. Buber the reader is referred to the note to his essay "The Man of Today and the Jewish Bible," on page 327 of this issue—ED.

MANY heads of families of Berditchev complained to the rabbi of Rizhyn that their sons-in-law had left wives and children in order to become his disciples, and when they asked him to persuade the youths to return home, he told them about a young man who had lived in the days of the Great Maggid. He had quitted his father-in-law's house to go to the maggid. They had fetched him back and he had

pledged on a hand-clasp that he would stay at home. Yet shortly thereafter he was gone. Now his father-in-law got the rav of the town to declare that this broken promise was cause for divorce. The young man was thus deprived of all means of subsistence. Soon he fell ill and died.

When the *zaddik* had finished his story, he added: "And now, my good men, when the Messiah comes, the young man will hail

his father-in-law before his court of justice. The father-in-law will quote the rav of the town, and the rav will quote a passage from the commentary on the Shulhan Arukh. Then the Messiah will ask the young man why after giving his hand on it that he would remain at home he broke his promise just the same, and the young man will say, 'I just had to go to the rabbi!' In the end the Messiah will pronounce judgment. To the father-in-law he will say: 'You took the rav's word as your authority and so you are justified.' And to the rav he will say: 'You took the law as your authority and so you are justified.'

"And then he will add: 'But I have come for those who are not justified.'"

IT is written: "A Psalm of David," and following: "... after he had gone in to Bathsheba." This is how Rabbi Shalom expounded the verse: "David returned to God and said his psalm to him with the same passion with which he had gone to Bathsheba. That was why God forgave him on the instant."

ONCE the hasidim were seated together in all brotherliness, when Rabbi Israel joined them, his pipe in his hand. Because he was so friendly, they asked him: "Tell us, dear rabbi, how should we serve God?" He was surprised at the question and replied: "How should I know!" But then he went right on talking and told them this story:

There were two friends, and both were accused before the king of a crime. Since he loved them he wanted to show them mercy. He could not acquit them because even the king's word cannot prevail over a law.

So he gave this verdict: A rope was to be stretched across a deep chasm and the two accused were to walk, one after the other; whoever reached the other side was to be granted his life. It was done as the king ordered, and the first of the friends got safely across. The other, still standing in the same spot, cried to him: "Tell me, my friend, how did you manage to cross that terrible chasm?" The first called back: "I don't know anything but this: whenever I felt myself toppling over to one side, I leaned to the other."

MOSHE LEIB's father was bitterly opposed to the hasidic way. When he learned that Moshe Leib had left the house without his knowledge and gone to Rabbi Shmelke's House of Study in Nikolsburg, he flew into a rage. He cut a vicious rod and kept it in his room against his son's return. Whenever he saw a more suitable twig on a tree, he cut a new rod which he thought would be more effective and threw the old one away. Time passed and many rods were exchanged. In the course of a thorough house-cleaning a servant once took the rod up to the attic.

Soon afterward Moshe Leib asked his teacher's leave to absent himself for a short while and went home. When he saw his father jump at sight of him and start on a furious search, he went straight up to the attic, fetched the rod, and laid it down in front of the old man. The latter gazed into the grave and loving face of his son and was won over.

THE rabbi of Sasov once traveled about trying to collect money to ransom persons in the debtors' prison, but he did not succeed in getting together the sum he needed. Then he regretted having wasted time he might have spent studying and praying, and resolved that henceforth he would stay home. On the same day he heard that a Jew who had stolen an article of clothing had been soundly beaten and put in jail. Rabbi Moshe Leib interceded with the judge and gained the thief's release.

When the zaddik went to fetch the thief from jail, he warned him: "Remember the beating they gave you and don't ever do anything like that again!"

"Why not?" said the thief. "If you don't succeed the first time, you may succeed the next."

"If that's the case," said the rabbi to himself, "then I must keep trying at my job, too."

ONE midnight when Rabbi Moshe Leib was absorbed in the mystic teachings, he heard a knock at his window. A drunken peasant stood outside and asked to be let in and given a bed for the night. For a moment the zaddik's heart was full of anger and he said to himself: "How can a drunk have the insolence to ask to be let in, and

what business has he in this house!" But then he said silently in his heart: "And what business has he in God's world? But if God gets along with him, can I reject him?" He opened the door at once, and prepared a bed.

THE rabbi of Sasov once gave the last money he had in his pocket to a man of ill repute. His disciples threw it up to him. He answered them: "Shall I be more finicky than God, who gave it to me?"

RABBI MOSHE LEIB told this story: "How to love men is something I learned from a peasant. He was sitting in an inn along with other peasants, drinking. For a long time he was as silent as all the rest, but when he was moved by the wine, he asked one of the men seated beside him: 'Tell me, do you love me or don't you love me?' The other replied: 'I love you very much.' But the first peasant replied: 'You say that you love me, but you do not know what I need. If you really loved me, you would know.' The other had not a word to say to this, and the peasant who had put the question fell silent again.

"But I understood. To know the needs of men and to bear the burden of their sorrow—that is the true love of men."

ON the eve of the Day of Atonement, when the time had come to say Kol Nidre, all the hasidim were gathered together in the House of Prayer waiting for the rabbi. But time passed and he did not come. Then one of the women of the congregation said to herself: "I guess it will be quite a while before they begin, and I was in such a hurry and my child is alone in the house. I'll just run home and look after it to make sure it hasn't awakened. I can be back in a few minutes."

She ran home and listened at the door. Everything was quiet. Softly she turned the knob and put her head into the room—and there stood the rabbi holding her child in his arms. He had heard the child crying on his way to the House of Prayer, and had played with it and sung to it until it fell asleep.

THE rabbi of Rizhyn related: "Once when the holy Baal Shem Tov wanted to save the life of a sick boy he was

very much attached to, he ordered a candle made of pure wax, carried it to the woods, fastened it to a tree, and lit it. Then he pronounced a long prayer. The candle burned all night. When morning came, the boy was well.

"When my grandfather, the Great Maggid, who was the holy Baal Shem's disciple, wanted to work a like cure, he no longer knew the secret meaning of the words on which he had to concentrate. He did as his master had done and called on his name. And his efforts met with success.

"When Rabbi Moshe Leib, the disciple of the disciple of the Great Maggid, wanted to work a cure of this kind, he said: 'We have no longer the power even to do what was done. But I shall relate the story of how it was done, and God will help.' And his efforts met with success."

ONCE Rabbi Bunam was asked: "Have you ever known a zaddik whose heart was broken and crushed and yet sound and whole?"

Rabbi Bunam replied: "Yes, I did know such a zaddik. It was Rabbi Moshe Leib of Sasov."

A RESPECTED woman once came to ask the advice of the rabbi of Apt. The instant he set eyes on her he shouted: "Adulteress! You sinned only a short while ago, and yet now you have the insolence to step into this pure house!" Then from the depths of her heart the woman replied: "The Lord of the world has patience with the wicked. He is in no hurry to make them pay their debts and he does not disclose their secret to any creature, lest they be ashamed to turn to him. Nor does he hide his face from them. But the rabbi of Apt sits there in his chair and cannot resist revealing at once what the Creator has covered." From that time on the rabbi of Apt used to say: "No one ever got the better of me except once—and then it was a woman."

THE rabbi of Apt said: "Every one of Israel is told to consider himself to be standing at Mount Sinai to receive the Torah. For man there are past and future events, but not for God; day in, day out, he gives the Torah."

ONCE when there was not a piece of bread in Rabbi Mendel's house, his son ran to him crying and complained his hunger was so great he could bear it no longer.

"Your hunger is not so great as all that," said his father. "For otherwise I should have something to quiet it."

The boy slunk off without a word. But before he reached the door, the rabbi saw a small coin lying on the table.

"I wronged you," he called out. "You are really very hungry indeed."

RABBI Elimelekh's servant once forgot a spoon for Rabbi Mendel who was a guest at Rabbi Elimelekh's table. Everyone ate except Rabbi Mendel. The zaddik observed this and asked:

"Why aren't you eating?"

"I have no spoon," said his guest.

"Look," said Rabbi Elimelekh, "one must know enough to ask for a spoon, and a plate too, if need be!"

Rabbi Mendel took the word of his teacher to heart. From that day on his fortunes were on the mend.

RABBI Mendel once boasted to his teacher Rabbi Elimelekh that evenings he saw the angel who rolls away the light before the darkness, and mornings the angel who rolls away the darkness before the light. "Yes," said Rabbi Elimelekh, "in my youth I saw that too. Later on you don't see those things any more."

WHEN the rabbi of Rizhyn betrothed his grandson to the daughter of Rabbi Hirsh of Rymanov, before the writing of the marriage contract he said: "It is the custom in my family to recite our genealogy at the time of betrothal. And that is what I shall now do. My grandfather's father was Rabbi Baer, my grandfather was Rabbi Abraham the Angel, and my father Rabbi Shalom Shakhna." He had given merely the names of the Great Maggid, his son, and his grandson, without adding the usual honorary titles. Then he said to Rabbi Hirsh: "Now it is your turn to tell us from whom you are descended."

Rabbi Hirsh replied: "My father and mother left this earth when I was ten years old, and so I did not know them well enough to be able to speak of them, but

I have been told that they were upright and honest folk. When they died, my relatives apprenticed me to a tailor. I stayed with him for five years, and even though I was very young I worked well. I was careful not to ruin what was new, and to repair what was old."

"The marriage is agreeable to both sides," cried the rabbi of Rizhyn.

THE rabbi of Kobryn once looked at the Heavens and cried: "Angel, little angel! It is no great trick to be an angel up there in the sky! You don't have to eat and drink, beget children and earn money. Just you come down to earth and worry about eating and drinking, about raising children and earning money, and we shall see if you keep on being an angel. If you succeed, you may boast—but not now!"

IN ROPTCHITZ, the town where Rabbi Naftali lived, it was the custom for the rich people whose houses stood isolated or at the far end of the town to hire men to watch over their property by night. Late one evening Rabbi Naftali was skirting the woods which circled the city, and he met such a watchman walking up and down. "For whom are you working?" he asked. The man told him and then inquired in his turn: "And whom are you working for, Rabbi?"

The words struck the zaddik like a shaft. "I am not working for anybody just yet," he barely managed to say. Then he walked up and down beside the man for a long time. "Will you be my servant?" he finally asked. "I should like to," the man replied, "but what would be my duties?"

"To remind me," said Rabbi Naftali.

ONCE on the Great Sabbath the rabbi of Roptchitz came home from the House of Prayer with weary steps. "What made you so tired?" asked his wife. "It was the sermon," he replied. "I had to speak of the poor and their many needs for the coming Passover, for unleavened bread and wine and everything else is terribly high this year."

"And what did you accomplish with your sermon?" his wife went on to ask.

"Half of what is necessary," he answered. "You see, the poor are now ready to take.

As for the other half, whether the rich are ready to give—I don't know about that yet."

THE Yehudi's wife often subjected him to long quarrelsome speeches. He always listened to what she had to say, but remained silent and accepted it cheerfully. Once however when her nagging was a good deal worse than usual, he answered her back. Later his disciple Rabbi Bunam asked him: "In what way is this day different from others?" The Yehudi answered him: "I saw that her soul was about to leave her body for rage because I did not let her scolding annoy me. And so I said a trifling word, that she might feel that her words troubled me and draw strength from this feeling."

THE rabbi of Zans used to tell this story about himself:

"In my youth when I was fired with the love of God, I thought I would convert the whole world to God. But soon I discovered that it would be quite enough to convert the people who lived in my town, and I tried for a long time, but did not succeed. Then I realized that my program was still much too ambitious, and I concentrated on the persons in my own household. But I could not convert them either. Finally it dawned on me: I must work upon myself, so that I may give true service to God. But I did not accomplish even this."

SHORTLY before his death Rabbi Hayyim said to a man who had come to visit him: "If I had nine true friends whose hearts were one with mine, we should each put a loaf in his knapsack and go out into the field together and walk in the field and pray and pray, until our prayers were granted and redemption came."

RABBI BUNAM was once walking outside the city with some of his disciples. He bent, picked up a speck of sand, looked at it, and put it back exactly where he had found it. "He who does not believe," he said, "that God wants this bit of sand to lie in this particular place, does not believe at all."

RABBI YEHEZKEL OF KOZNITZ told a disciple of Rabbi Bunam: When your

teacher was a pharmacist in Pzhysha we saw a great deal of each other. One time I would go to him, the next he would come to me. One evening when I entered his pharmacy I saw an instrument lying on a bench, the kind whose strings you pluck with your fingers. Just then a peasant woman came to have a prescription filled. With one hand Rabbi Bunam made up the medicine, with the other he fingered the strings. When the woman had left I said to him: "Rabbi Bunam, that is unholy conduct!" Said he: "Rabbi Yehezkel, you are no real hasid!"

I went home and in my heart I bore him a grudge. But that night my grandfather appeared to me, boxed my ears, and shouted: "Don't spy on that man, he shines into all the halls of Heaven."

A MAN who pursued honors came to Rabbi Bunam and told him his father had appeared to him in a dream and said: "I herewith announce to you that you are destined to be a leader." The zaddik accepted the story in silence. Soon afterward, the man returned and said that he had the same dream over again.

"I see," said Rabbi Bunam, "that you are prepared to become a leader of men. If your father comes to you once more, answer him that you are ready to lead, but that he should also appear to the people whom you are supposed to lead."

RABBI BUNAM was asked: "What is meant by the expression 'sacrificing to idols'? It is unthinkable that a man should really bring a sacrifice to idols!"

He said: "I shall give you an example. When a devout and righteous man sits at table with others and would like to eat a little more but refrains because of what the people might think of him—that is sacrificing to idols."

RABBI BUNAM once said to Rabbi Mendel, his disciple: "If I am sentenced to hell—what shall I do?"

Mendel was silent.

After a while Rabbi Bunam said: "This is what I'll do. Our sages say: 'If a disciple is banished, his teachers are banished together with him.' Well then, I shall say: 'Bring me my teachers, the Seer of Lublin and the holy Yehudi!'"

Then Mendel answered: "This cannot of course come up as far as you are concerned," he said, "but knowing it can be of great use to me."

A HASID came to the rabbi of Kotzk. "Rabbi," he complained, "I keep brooding, and don't seem to be able to stop." "What do you brood about?" asked the rabbi.

"I keep brooding about whether there really is a judgment and a judge."

"What does it matter to you?"

"Rabbi! If there is no judgment and no judge, then what does all creation mean?"

"What does that matter to you?"

"Rabbi! If there is no judgment and no judge, then what do the words of the Torah mean?"

"What does that matter to you?"

"Rabbi! 'What does it matter to me?' What does the rabbi think? What else could matter to me?"

"Well, if it matters to you as much as all that," said the rabbi of Kotzk, "then you are a good Jew after all—and it is quite all right for a good Jew to brood: nothing can go wrong with him."

A MAN came to the rabbi of Kotzk and told him his trouble.

"People call me a bigot," he said. "What kind of an infirmity are they ascribing to me? Why a bigot? Why not a pious man?"

"A bigot," the rabbi answered him, "converts the main issue in piety into a side issue, and a side issue into the main issue."

THE rabbi of Kotzk called to some of his hasidim: "What is all this talk of praying 'earnestly'? What is the meaning of to pray 'earnestly'?"

They did not understand what he had in mind.

"Is there anything at all," he said, "that one ought not to do earnestly?"

IT is told in the Midrash:

The ministering angels once said to God: "You have permitted Moses to write whatever he wants to, so there is nothing to prevent him from saying to Israel: 'I have given you the Torah.'" God replied: "This he would not do, but if he did, he would still be keeping faith with me."

Rabbi Yitzhak of Vorki's disciples once asked him to interpret this. He answered by telling them a parable:

A merchant wanted to go on a journey. He took on an assistant and let him work in his shop. He himself spent most of his time in the adjoining room from where he could hear what was going on next door. During the first year he sometimes heard his assistant tell a customer: "The master cannot let this go for so low a price." The merchant did not go on his journey. In the course of the second year he occasionally heard the voice next door say: "We cannot let it go for so low a price." He postponed his journey. But in the third year he heard his assistant say: "I can't let this go for so low a price." It was then that he started on his journey.

ONCE Rabbi Menahem Mendel spent an entire night in the company of his hasidim. No one spoke, but all were filled with great reverence and experienced great elation. Finally the rabbi said: "Well for the Jew who knows that the meaning of 'One' is one!"

SOON after the death of a zaddik who was a friend of the rabbi of Vorki, one of his hasidim, who had been present at the death, came to Rabbi Mendel and told him about it.

"How was it?" asked Rabbi Mendel.

"Very beautiful," said the hasid. "It was as though he went from one room into the next."

"From one room to the next?" said Rabbi Mendel. "No, from one corner into another corner."

THE rabbi of Ger told this story:

"As a child I did not want to study grammar, for I thought it was just a subject like many others. But later I devoted myself to it because I realized that the secrets of the Torah depend upon it."

RABBI HANOKH said: "The other nations too believe that there are two worlds. They too say: 'In the other world.' The difference is this: They think that the two are separate and severed, but Israel professes that the two worlds are essentially one, and shall, indeed, become one."

ON THE HORIZON

The Flight from Europe

ROBERT WARSHOW

PROBABLY no evidence will ever be sufficient to make us fully understand the experience of Europe's Jews in the past fifteen years; but all evidence is immensely important. We owe a debt to Meyer Levin for *The Illegals*, a film record of the flight of one group of Jews along the path of illegal emigration, from Poland to Haifa (and thence to Cyprus), during the fall of 1947. I wish *The Illegals* were a better film; but a camera automatically records what is before it, and in this case it is the record that counts most—the faces and bodies of the Jews who survived: it is impossible to watch them in even their most commonplace actions without feeling the presence of the events to which they can testify. (I think it tells something of our state of mind that there were perhaps twenty people in the theater when I saw the film. I should not have been there myself if I had not been asked to go.)

The Illegals is like a travelogue made in

THIS new department will represent, we hope, house-room for short pieces on a wide variety of subjects—reflections on and reactions to ideas and events; reports on occasions and happenings; comment on plays, films, music, and art; or just notions, sudden insights, and fancies. The accent will be on the brief and the informal; and perhaps on culture, in its broadest sense, rather than on politics—but we have no intention of being too rigorous in this respect either. On this horizon, we confess only to a bias in the direction of latitude rather than longitude. For its first two pieces, "On the Horizon" offers a review of Meyer Levin's film *The Illegals* and a personal reflection by one of our younger writers on prejudice as a sin. ROBERT WARSHOW is managing editor of COMMENTARY. MYRON KAUFMANN is a newspaper man in Baltimore.

a tunnel: no scenery, no incidents, only a destination. Most often the Jews are seen walking in a tight procession through some forest across some border—it might be anywhere—or packed into closed trucks, or in a cramped and characterless room in some camp or reception center, once or twice in a freight car. Poland to Czechoslovakia to Austria to Germany to France to Italy—these places are only names; the Jews move across Europe in a trance, noticing nothing, offering no comment, speaking only to those who can tell them what step must be taken next: tear up your papers; go to the Judengasse and ask for Shlomo; go to this or that village and from there across the Alps.

The camera wanders sometimes, but usually within very narrow conceptual limits, diminishing the characters against a monotonous background of destruction, picking out ruined buildings, wrecked tanks, and once, with hesitant and ambiguous opportunism, a crucifix. But for the Jews, once they have seen the absolute emptiness of the ruined ghetto of Warsaw, even ruins have no meaning. They stay inside their windowless vehicles and constricted dormitories, their private world, touching bodies in an intimacy that seems all the stronger because it is usually sexless and practical; they stand always in a circle, looking inward, at each other. The main characters, Sara and Mika, have one possession, a camera: they use it only to photograph each other in stiff poses standing on a heap of rubble; it is a way of saying all they have to say: we have survived. This is not even a statement of triumph; it is simply, for this moment and these people, the one fact of their experience that they are ready to absorb and make use of. Some day they may be willing to say more, but not in Europe and not *for* Europe; for the moment, like the featureless mass of the ruined ghetto itself, they have been drained of content.

Indeed, Europe does not exist for them; it is only meaningless boundaries and anonymous officials—a whole system, no doubt, but no longer any concern of theirs except to circumvent it and get away. And for this, there is a counter-system, equally vague and impersonal: committees, offices, card indexes, the Shlomos and Reubens of Haganah with their discreet conspiratorial skills. Within this counter-system, there is a password, the greeting “Shalom,” which runs through the film like a slogan, bearing an intolerable weight—this word and the word “Palestine” must serve these people almost as the whole of culture and belief: the only world that really exists is the one they have heard of but not seen—Palestine, an idea at the end of the tunnel.

Shut off from experience, they use their names as proof of their existence, and when the necessities of escape require that names be changed to match whatever papers are available, they will not quite give in. “Rachel Benyamin,” Sara says to the man checking off names on a list, “but my *real* name is Sara Wilner.” And they write their names on Europe’s walls—*my* flesh touched *this* spot; how else can one know one is alive in a world without landmarks? One man searches on the wall of a freight car: “I wrote my name in a car like this on the way to Auschwitz.” But Auschwitz was more than a word, and no one says anything.

There is also a kind of plot, in which Sara and Mika are separated and meet again finally on the ship that takes them from Europe. But the plot counts for little: one does not care that this particular couple has been separated and reunited; indeed, one hardly cares about the particulars of anyone’s suffering: if there are to be survivors, then for the spectator—and for the “system”—one survivor is the same as another: it matters only to Sara Wilner that she is not Rachel Benyamin. They are a mass of statistics, differentiated only enough to show that the statistics do refer to real human beings. But for the Jew in the audience, it is the very bareness of their personalities that brings these people inescapably close. In the theater, one’s own name matters as little as Sara Wilner’s: Jews, as Jews, are interchangeable; if even one man has been killed because he was a Jew, then we are all survivors.

FROM the beginning, one is conscious of a certain amateurishness in the film: situations are sketched crudely and hastily; the main characters move stiffly and speak their lines like children in a high-school play, hardly ever achieving just the right tone and emphasis; the very use of the camera sometimes suggests those films of family excursions that are made to be shown to friends, and the voice of the commentator, especially in the early parts, is too often like the voice that accompanies such films: there’s John swimming; there’s Mika in the ruins of the ghetto.

Some of this crudity reflects a lack of imagination and taste. One example is the unspecific journalistic “effect” of the crucifix shot I have already mentioned; in a film that permits so few “intrusions” of the non-Jewish world, this particular symbol is almost the worst possible choice, since the meaning of the crucifix, under the circumstances, can only be ironical, but the irony itself belongs to the Christians (for a Jew, there must be more relevant comments on the treatment of Jews than to say it is un-Christian) and is in any case too general. Another example is the introduction of “voices” rising from the ruined ghetto, as if it were necessary to establish that the murdered Jews had a claim to live. Much of the crudity, also, must be the result of the conditions under which the film was made: in the movement from place to place, it was most important to record as much as possible and as quickly as possible; many sequences had to be filmed at night and necessarily without adequate lighting; and the characters speak English, a language they have not assimilated.

But before the film is over, one comes to feel its crudity—and even, in some sense, its lapses of taste—as something essential, a quality of the life it portrays. In flight from their past, these Jews are forced to reconstitute themselves out of nothing—at best, out of the merest scraps, a hasty and rough amalgam of the anti-culture of the camps and the (to them) mythical culture of Palestine. This is their awkward age; one cannot watch even their gaiety, though it is genuine enough, without feeling that it lacks true cohesion. Like adolescents, they have not yet developed a style—or, rather, the style is a hastily assembled surface, and they remain frozen in formlessness under-

neath: what is their constant singing but an *attempt* to achieve form?

But the spectacle of normal adolescence is made tolerable by its character as part of a social whole, one stage in a more or less determined life-history; we think we know what the adolescent is likely to become. These people are not adolescents; their "awkwardness" springs precisely from the fact that they have been wrenched from the normal social and historical context and have become a world to themselves. And therefore their personalities take on a certain fixity and abstraction, just as their own image of the world, contained as it is in a number of symbols and ceremonials referring to a mythical future, is necessarily fixed and abstract. They are like figures in some pageant expressing a meaning that must remain ultimately unclear simply because this particular spectacle is the only means of expressing it; and the crudity of the figures who enact this spectacle—their archaicism, so to speak—is a part of the meaning: they exist, one might say, for this occasion only, this moment of history, deprived of the past and therefore deprived also of the future, which can have meaning for us only as a development out of the past. It is almost impossible to think of them as moving back into what we regard as the normal stream of life without at the same time denying the significance of what has happened to them: this is what makes it so difficult to confront them clearly, and why so much that has been said about them seems mere rhetoric, whether the rhetoric of optimism or that of despair.

It is possible to ask whether these figures can ever really become anything else than what they are. The film has no answer to give and it makes a bad mistake in trying. Mr. Levin identifies himself very closely with the people in his film (he himself plays one of the few "acted" roles), and much of the film's documentary value comes, no doubt, from its having been made so completely from the inside. But this necessarily leaves it with no perspective beyond those scattered elements of life and culture which the fleeing Jews themselves have hastily collected, and which they employ less as definitive ways toward any clearly defined state of "health" than as temporary psychological expedients to protect them

from an intolerable past. Perhaps one cannot expect that they themselves should at once face and assimilate their experience—though if there is any way to health for them, it must require this sooner or later. But if we are to understand what they represent (I assume it is important to try), then we should not too readily accept their own version of the meaning of their behavior—more especially because in their desperation they have seized upon certain cultural elements that are likely to be accepted as automatically meaningful.

These elements consist, on the one hand, of the more or less official symbols of a Zionist future—Hebrew songs and dances, the Jewish flag, the word "Shalom," the word "Palestine"—and, on the other, of certain "fundamental" concerns (also connected with Zionism): the conception of Palestine as a "soil" in which to strike "roots"; above all, a fierce concentration on children—the expected baby who *must* be born in Palestine, the child of the new "generation," who is to represent victory, happiness, life, everything that Europe is not. There is a profusion of children in the film, but the camera rarely lingers on them for their own sake—as if they were not interesting because they are not survivors. And the Jews carry them across Europe like so much necessary furniture to be used in setting up their homes in the new land. As the ship sails into Haifa harbor, escorted by a British warship, a child is born. In another shot, the camera moves in for a close-up of a child at its mother's breast. And as the film ends, Sara looks hopefully to the future, expecting her own child.

For these Jews, it is the mere fact of survival that counts most. Perhaps Palestine itself is sometimes no more to them than a symbolical embodiment of their survival, a name to be written on the earth as they write their own names on the walls of their stopping-places, to prove that they have lived. How much more than this Palestine can be will be determined only in the future—the real future, not the future they create as a protection against the past—and for each of them separately. (Even the obvious analogy between the modern exodus from Europe and the biblical exodus from Egypt, which is immediately suggested by this film and has become almost a standard formula in

journalism, requires examination: the Jewish awareness of a *long* history often masks a refusal to be aware of history at all.) And those children, too, born to be a new generation in the new land, must be recognized for what they are: a psychological expedient, one more *evidence* of survival and thus, perhaps, a way out of the real problem, which is not survival but the reestablishment of humanity. The fact that the children are also real children only makes the problem sharper. In the context of the events that stand behind this film, is a picture of a baby at its mother's breast *necessarily* a symbol of hope?

A Little Bit Prejudiced

MYRON KAUFMANN

WE NOW have the confession of a "liberal" Gentile that even he may like to relax now and then with one of his unreconstructed kinfolk who takes white-Protestant superiority for granted ("A Liberal Gentile Looks at Himself," by George Weltner, July 1948 COMMENTARY). I thought so; I rather suspected that the boisterous Jewish boys from the poorer parts of town had something to do with it when a college friend of mine—a clean-cut Unitarian who always stood on the "liberal" side of social questions—seemed increasingly uncomfortable at the University Commuters' Center and finally let his membership lapse.

If this is anti-Semitism, I suppose some of my best friends would turn out to be anti-Semites, if I scratched their surfaces. Alan, who reads the *Nation*, has confided to me that although "clannishness" is a bad word, he "still can't help noticing" that the Jews in his home town persist in marrying among themselves and inviting a preponderance of Jewish wedding guests. Tom, who once headed a national liberal organization, sometimes talks as if the jostling and pushing in New York's subway crowds were an exclusive import from Eastern Europe.

Considerable recent propaganda has been aimed at a potential danger supposed to lurk in such men as these. Mr. Weltner, who owns up to "enjoying" his Gentile background, feels himself convicted as a small-scale Goering.

But are these prejudices the *seeds* of anti-Semitism—or do they represent, at least in the "liberal Gentile," anti-Semitism's last stand? My friends may lend a qualified credence to their fathers' tales of Jewish businessmen, but they refuse to assume their fathers' habits of social discrimination. Moreover, they confide their prejudices to me in the hope that I can explain them away.

Should we then acquit the "liberal Gentile," in the absence of any overt anti-Semitic act? Should we rule that, after all, the proof of the pudding is in the eating?

I would say yes, if only because I suspect that the vast majority of liberals, and possibly the base of any liberal movement, must be made up of people like Mr. Weltner. The small number of "pure liberals" would be left with few allies if they denounced every person who has managed to achieve good conduct but yet finds that no amount of reason seems to prevail against the "residual prejudices" learned from his parents in childhood.

AND when I say "vast majority," I am not confining myself to those liberals who happen to be Gentiles. I include Jews, and very probably Negroes and members of other minority-groupings as well. To be plain about it, if I condemn Mr. Weltner I must also condemn myself—and any number of "liberal Jews."

In the first place, I must confess to what I will refer to as "Jewish prejudices." By this I do not mean merely a pride in the success of Israeli arms, a possessive admiration of Professor Einstein, or a taste for cheese blintzes. I mean that, in congenial Jewish company, I am capable of relaxing into a chauvinistic theory that rolls all non-Jews into a single—and inferior—species: the Gentile. I can even nod in lazy agreement when the shortcomings of almost any non-Jew are shrugged off with a half-humorous, "Well, after all, what can you expect?" And I can listen receptively when Jewish failures, on the other hand, are ascribed to the evil influence or the stupid mismanagement of the Gentile majority.

More than this, I find that I have absorbed the prejudices of that very Gentile majority among which I was raised. I was early acquainted with the New England hierarchy that rates "The Irish" a notch be-

low "The Yankees," and the French-Canadians a notch lower still. At the age of four I already knew that my Jewishness involved a stigma, and that my community ranked Protestants, Catholics, and Jews in that order. (I cannot say to whom I am more indebted for this knowledge: my Gentile playmates, or my Jewish elders—most of whom had already suffered a life-long exposure to the raw New England climate.)

Even today, try as I may to suppress such unbecoming sentiments, I am capable of enjoying a secret sense of superiority in the presence of persons whose mannerisms, racial markings, or place of residence seem more characteristically Jewish than my own. Of course, I was aware even as a very young child that the community's "caste" beliefs ran counter to the Jewish loyalties that were being inculcated in me at the same time. But my corruption came at an impressionable age, and on a level that undercuts reason.

It would be too facile and in fact erroneous to classify me with the self-hating Jewish woman in *Gentleman's Agreement*. I wear my Judaism openly and—I hope—with outward dignity and inward pride. I have managed to keep up a personal reputation as a reasonably balanced adult and a political progressive. Yet—to be frank—there remain within me traces of New England snobbery, and a divided sense of Jewishness that makes me prefer brunettes in private and blondes in public.

But I don't see much point in beating my breast, or in a liberal Gentile beating his. It seems to me that my rational levels must be in control, or I would not have passed for a liberal for so long. The same seems true of Mr. Weltner. At any rate, I am sure I could be safely entrusted to his mercy.

I MAY be told that "evil" thoughts must sooner or later lead to evil actions: if a man is secretly "glad" he is a Gentile, then his opposition to residential covenants and educational quotas must inevitably flag. But everyday evidence contradicts this. Many a solid citizen entertains lurid thoughts when a flimsily-dressed young woman stands beside him at a car-stop. But

if he refrains from translating the thoughts into action he is not arrested for them. So long as he has a sense of propriety and the will to behave accordingly, he remains an acceptable member of society.

Indeed, does not our whole moral code rest on the recognition that "instincts" or desires sometimes run counter to human decency or social necessity? We do not expect that men will never feel an urge to embezzle, or to punch a neighbor in the nose, or to take advantage of an unfair situation. We ask only that those who feel such urges put their temptations behind them.

Mr. Weltner envies his accusers' apparent immunity to evil thoughts. He aspires to purity, and complains that his disease seems incurable. But what is important to society is that he has his disease well under control.

The hope for people like Mr. Weltner and myself is that a man who knows himself to be "wicked" inside may still try to behave as if he were not. I used to know a young Southern newspaperman who, although popular and influential among his associates, had attracted no particular attention as a militant liberal and presumably had no desire to pose as one. When asked on a statistical poll whether he had "any degree of prejudice against Negroes," his confidential answer was: "A little, I'm afraid." But when the question arose publicly as to whether Negroes should be admitted to a semi-professional, semi-social organization of which he was a member, and in which membership was highly prized, he was among those who argued for the Negroes, and it was his quiet insistence, rather than the half-hearted platitudes of his Northern colleagues, that finally turned out to be decisive. He may still lay claim to "a little" prejudice, but his practical liberalism—if practiced often enough—will in time become habitual.

Perhaps the Hollanders and Italians and others of Europe's good people who helped hunted Jews escape from the Nazis did so to enjoy a thrill of power, or to relish their own moral superiority to the Nazis, or to point up their relative immunity as Nordics. But let us not trouble to ask them: let each of them work out the problem for himself. Suffice it for us to look at the deed.

THE STUDY OF MAN

ANTI-SEMITISM'S ROOT IN CITY-HATRED

A Clue to the Jew's Position as Scapegoat

ARNOLD ROSE

STUDENTS of prejudice have usually analyzed it from the standpoint of the objective outsider: they note that prejudiced beliefs deviate sharply from fact, and they try—by pointing out fact—to bring belief closer to fact. They fail to realize that the typically prejudiced person is likely to be quite familiar with the objects of his prejudice—Negroes or Jews—the falsity of his prejudices being daily demonstrated by the plain evidence of his senses. As a matter of fact, he even knows that his beliefs are false: “some of my best friends are Jews,” he says, and he knows many “good Negroes.” Yet he will continue to say “All Jews are Communists,” or “Niggers can’t be trusted.”

Yet, however false as to fact, prejudice has a certain logic, a logic not of reason but of the emotions. Prejudice is not an eccentric whim or fancy; it has psychological roots which can be traced.

Prejudice is more than false belief; it is a

THIS article analyzes the ways in which the object of prejudice—the Jew, the Negro, or any other chosen as victim—serves as the symbolic embodiment of certain psychological fears and hates which the prejudiced person is able to cope with only through the use of an external scapegoat. ARNOLD ROSE is assistant professor of sociology at Washington University in St. Louis. He collaborated with Gunnar Myrdal in the writing of *An American Dilemma* (1944), the monumental study of the American Negro, and he has recently written an abridgement of this work, *The Negro in America*. Professor Rose was born in Chicago in 1918 and earned his doctorate at the University of Chicago.

structure of false beliefs *with a purpose*, however unconscious. In analyzing prejudice, it is important to discover the false beliefs, but it is more important to discover their purpose. Similarly, in fighting against prejudice, it is important to puncture the false beliefs factually, but it is more important to weaken the purpose. The false beliefs are the symptoms of prejudice, but the purpose is its root cause.

How do we find out the purpose of a prejudice? There are no infallible ways, but the social scientist has some good clues. In the first place, he reasons that a structure of false beliefs that lasts for hundreds of years, as in the case of anti-Negro prejudice, or for thousands of years, as in the case of anti-Semitism, must represent a *substitute satisfaction* for some great need which cannot be satisfied normally or even openly expressed. The prejudices have what he terms a “symbolic significance.” The symbolic significance of flat dresses and flat bobs for women during the 1920’s seems to have been that women felt a need to look like men, and yet did not wish to admit that need openly. This is a very simple example, but on a far more complex level we have warrant for believing that “Jews” and “Negroes” have similar symbolic significance for prejudiced persons.

It has become common to say that Jews and Negroes are hated and feared because they have become the “scapegoats” onto which aggressions against frustrating conditions can be displaced. For instance, many well-meaning people who have thought about the position of the Negro in the South have come to believe that the hatred of the Negro stems solely from the economic deprivations of the whites. Because the poor white is kept down—by the

rich Southern plantation owner, by the rich Northern industrialist, or simply by the undeveloped physical environment—he is frustrated, and vents his aggressions against the Negro, feeling helpless to revolt against the dominant groups. Similarly, it is said that German Jews were made scapegoats for all the frustrations due to political instability, inflation, and the Versailles Treaty. There is much truth in this “scapegoat-displacement” or “frustration-aggression” theory. It does explain why a group with a common and major dissatisfaction with which it cannot come to grips feels a need to hate and fear a substitute symbol. But the scapegoat theory does not explain *why one group and not another is always chosen* to be the scapegoat. It does not explain why those who are not frustrated are frequently almost as prejudiced as those who are.

THE major charges against Jews are that they are sneaky, dishonest, selfish, domineering, too clever, too ambitious, clannish, vulgar, noisy, and inclined to radicalism. The major charges against Negroes are that they are unbridled, passionate, violent, immoral, animal-like, untrustworthy, and lazy. There are some peculiar inconsistencies in these popular assertions. For example, Negroes are believed to be lazy and unambitious, yet they are said to be seeking political domination over whites in the South. Evidence of individual Negroes becoming “intelligent,” proud, ambitious, self-confident, provokes the most violent reactions in the South. Jews are said to be clannish, yet they are also said to be always trying to push into circles where they are not wanted. Jews are held to be domineering, yet any evidence of Jews becoming servile or seeking sympathy stimulates only sadism on the part of those prejudiced against them.

Some of the distortions of fact are significantly peculiar. For example, a group of persons who had already volunteered the information that they objected to Jews because they had too much power, were asked what types of businesses they thought Jews dominated. They said that Jews dominated finance and politics. Few said that Jews dominated the movie and radio industries or the manufacture of clothing—which happen actually to be the only types of businesses in which Jews are disproportionately represented.

One of the most fascinating facts about statements of prejudice is the constant repeti-

tion of certain “reasons” in any and all contexts. When one argues with a prejudiced Southerner on the basis of fact and reason that no harm could come from letting Negroes use the regular restaurants and hotels, or suggests any measure, however mild, to reduce segregation and discrimination, he almost invariably ends up with the equivalent of “Would you like your daughter to marry a Negro?” These are the types of raw facts we pick up about prejudice. How can we interpret them? Looking at the stereotypes about Negroes, it is obvious that most of them picture the Negro as uninhibited, with special emphasis on the absence of sexual inhibitions. Then, we may ask from what premises do prejudiced whites draw the conclusion that their daughters would marry Negroes if they were to sit at the next table in a restaurant? Logically, we must infer that there is a repressed sexual attraction. When we check into Southern folklore we find that there are myths about Negro males having unusually large sexual organs, and tales about the greater passion and sexual adeptness of Negro females. Several of the stereotypes about Negroes—that they are uninhibited, rhythmic, passionate—further indicate their sexual attractiveness. We need not go into all the reasons which lead us to believe that the Negro is a symbol of free and passionate sex—which is desired by white Americans but still not felt to be proper in our society, with its codes of sexual expression.

The emotions which form the basis of prejudice are, on the one hand, hate and fear, and, on the other hand, envy and desire. Envy is created not only by the white male's desire for the Negro female, but also by his belief that the white female would prefer the Negro male to him if she had equal access to both. Similarly, the white female must suppress her desires for the Negro male, and she envies the Negro female her superior attractiveness for the white male.

IN THE United States, at least, there is little association of Jews with sexual desirability. Rather, the Jews are associated with economic success, political radicalism, and quick adaptiveness to a rapidly changing world. Historically such traits are connected with life in cities, and so are the Jews. The Jews are the urban people *par excellence*. In the Middle Ages they engaged in the then-despised commercial and

financial occupations and were not allowed to live outside of cities. When capitalism grew and the cities expanded, the Jews had a head start, and became successful in terms of the new values despite the hurdles put in their way. Historical trends transformed what was intended to be a punishment into a reward. Non-Jews came to be envious of that reward. Envy generated hate—and there was already the initial hate arising from the Jews' rejection of Jesus as God.

It is worth noting how the popular image of the Jew is related to the city in many ways. (In much of America, "New York" and "Jew" are almost interchangeable epithets.) It is not simply that the Jew adapts to city life and makes a success of it. The Jew is willing to submit to the repression of the "free instincts" which is required by the city. The Jew is also thought of as rootless, as unattached to the "community" with its meaningful values. The Jew is mysterious; he might be the manipulator of all those forces which seem to control the life of the little man in the big city. *

The Jews are hated today, I would suggest, primarily because they serve as a symbol of city life. Residents of cities as well as farm or village people can, and do, hate cities and what they stand for.† An overall correlation between hatred of city life and hatred of Jews has not yet been empirically established, but there is indirect evidence that further study would find one.

In the first place, there is among the masses of urban residents, from whom anti-Semitism gets its most violent expression in America, a nostalgia for country life and the rural virtues. Sometimes it takes the form of a desire for ease and for avoidance of hustle-and-bustle, but

*The symbolic identification of Jews with city life may be a strictly modern phenomenon. In a recent study, Joshua Trachtenberg has carefully accumulated evidence which indicates that in the Middle Ages Jews were symbolically identified with the devil. As long as the Jews rejected God—that is, Jesus—they could only be considered as partisans of the devil, in the minds of the medieval Christians. If they accepted God—that is, became Christians—they were no longer the objects of prejudice. This fact alone would indicate that anti-Semitism has changed its character in modern times. A Jew cannot avoid prejudice today by becoming a Christian: he is still regarded as a Jew.

†See "Why Americans are Insecure," by Arnold Green (COMMENTARY, July 1948), for an extensive sociological analysis of the impact of urbanization on the native American population.

always it includes a wish for a simple, straightforward existence. The wealthy classes are not exempt from this, but are rather especially prone to it, perhaps in unconscious moral revulsion against the sharp and devious ways in which their own fortunes were often built up. The ideal picture of rural life is, of course, unrealistic, in terms of the actual life of an average farmer—an unrealism buttressed by the experiences of the city dwellers who can afford to take vacations in the country. Nevertheless, city dwellers are so taken in by their picture of country life, and the supposed virtues of honesty, clear-thinking, and altruism which that life is supposed to engender, that this may be a factor in their acquiescence in the political dominance of farm blocs and "downstate" or "upstate" political machines, as well as the special legislation that exists for the farmer: artificial support of high prices for his product, guarantee of a minimum income without the need for proving indigency, special exemption from the draft law.

The glorification of rural life has real historical roots, of course. The early history of our country took place largely in a rural setting, and many of the great heroes of America, as well as of other countries, had a rural origin. Children in schools are drilled in the glories and virtues of rural life until it becomes the nearest thing to heaven on earth. The rural people, on the other hand, are schooled in distrust of the city, and they can never quite understand its economic basis, or the competitive, disinterested character of its relations with them.

IT is not without significance that the city man's picture of country life excludes the Jew. He knows that Jews are not farmers, and every evidence that Jews ever have been or might become farmers is greeted with astonishment. Urban non-Jews who do not object to residential proximity to Jews in the city, are yet likely to protest vehemently against the presence of Jews in or near their summer resorts. Jews remind them of the city, whose ways they try to forget when they take their mental and moral, as well as physical, vacation.

Thus, perhaps, the host of contradictory antipathies toward the Jews can be explained by the association of these antipathies with another one—an antipathy toward city life. Jews are called sharp business men (capitalists) and are hated for that; Jews are called Com-

munists and are hated for that. Both capitalism and Communism are urban products, which are hated because they are too complex to be understood by the little people and because they "make trouble" for them. Yet there is no point in hating such impersonal phenomena as capitalism and Communism; it is much easier to hate their symbols—the Jews.

Jews are blamed for being successful and for being low class. But it is only by rural standards that they are successful—all city people are successful when they have to work only eight hours a day and can have so many of their household duties taken care of by other people. It is also by rural standards of an older day that Jews are low class. Farmers today may be just as dirty, just as concerned with striking a good bargain, and just as noisy (when they have a chance to talk) as lower-class city people, but gentlemen farmers or rural Puritans of an earlier day may not have been—at least in myth.

Jews have been blamed at the same time for being both narrow-minded and so cosmopolitan as to put their general human loyalties above their national loyalties. These are urban traits. The typical city dweller lives such a compartmentalized existence and is forced to avoid so large a portion of the stimuli that bear down on him from all sides that he must be narrow in terms of the possibilities of his world. Yet the city-dweller is often also forced to become aware of the wider currents of opinion and of problems outside his province or nation.

Similarly, the Jew is blamed for being at the same time cliquish and "pushy." The urbanite must make a selection of those to whom he chooses to respond among all the thousands with whom he comes in contact every day. The urbanite does, however, want to get ahead, and to cultivate those acquaintances that he believes will be enjoyable or profitable. The rural person, on the other hand, has a limited number of human contacts, and it is taken for granted that he will be "pushy"—that is, make friends with all he meets and learn as much about his acquaintances as he can.

The Jew is feared because he is believed to be superhumanly wise, and yet viewed with contempt because he is thought to be weak and "unhandy." The "city slicker" stereotype has merely been extended in the first instance, out of the truth that a wide range of social contacts sharpens the wits. On the other hand, the helplessness of the city man in the face of any breakdown of the complicated services that

usually support him is notorious. He does not have the knowledge or the tools to improvise in his physical environment, and when the web of interdependence he assumes is broken, he is helpless. This extends into his social, intellectual, and emotional life as well.

FOR understandable reasons, many urban and rural persons hate the characteristics of city life—the impersonality, the sharpness, the weakness, the cosmopolitanness, the narrow-mindedness, the pushiness, the cliquishness, the "capitalism" and the "Communism" which it creates. Yet these haters retain at least an unconscious recognition that the city is also necessary and good. They know that the many desirable products of modern life presuppose cities, and that much of what we are so proud of in "modern civilization" is a consequence of cities. They admire cities, at the same time as they fear and hate them. They hate cities because they cannot adjust to them, or—as in the case of the successful—because they feel that they have been immoral in adjusting to them. But just as they unconsciously admire the city, so they envy the Jews.

The symbolic projection of hatred of the city onto the Jews allows the prejudiced person to destroy the city and to escape the city, and at the same time to keep it and live in it. Prejudice, we have said, is a way of finding relief from a mental conflict about something; a particular group becomes identified as a symbol of that thing, so that the group can be hated and the thing itself left untouched. Of course, the conflict must be deep and important to the minds of the prejudiced persons, and the symbolic group must be associated over a long period of time with the thing in question—sex and cities, in our analysis—about which there is mental conflict. The conflict must be felt by most of the members of the society, and the symbolic association must occur for practically all of them before there can be prejudice.

Further evidence of the basis of prejudice in the symbolic substitution of a group of people for a thing which is both feared and admired, hated and loved, emerges when people who were once critical of uninhibited sex and of city life, or who come out of a background of such criticism, have a radical conversion in their favor. Those who rebel against the straight-lacedness of their childhood into bohemianism are the ones who go into ecstasies over all things Negro—they love the Negro because he

is so uninhibited, so natural, so "African." They are not concerned with the rights of the Negro *per se*, nor with his participation in a common humanity. They would put the Negro on a pedestal to love and admire—still a symbol of sex, now freed from puritanical restrictions. They have become converted, from both sex restrictions and anti-Negro feelings, but their symbolic identification of the two remains.

Similarly—although not nearly so often in American society—one can see that persons who radically break off from the anti-urban attitudes of their youthful environment and become enamoured of city life, who become Communist, or completely sophisticated, often can't do enough for Jews, for Jews as Jews. For these people, Jews are still the symbol of the city, or Communism, or of the pursuit of expensive pleasure they are now embracing.

The symbolic interpretation of prejudice allows for an explanation of group self-hatred. It is natural for a group of people who must participate in a culture to absorb aspects of that culture even when the latter work to the detriment of the group. Thus, Jews too hate the city; some of them fear it because they have not been able to make a satisfactory adjustment to its complexities. Unconsciously accepting the identification of Jews with the city, they hate the Jews and are ashamed of any manifestation of Jewishness (urbanity) in their own family. Though Negroes are perhaps less susceptible to this group self-hatred today, the severe criticisms by middle-class Negroes of the sex freedom displayed by lower-class Negroes offer an obvious example.

WHAT suggestions for the treatment of prejudices come out of this diagnosis? Since symbolic identification is only one of the requirements of prejudice, its disappearance could not eliminate prejudice completely. The neurotic whose compulsive behavior is a symbolic manifestation of a repressed childhood desire or fear, may not be able to rid himself of this behavior even when the symbolic significance of his neurosis is made clear to him and he accepts it.

But understanding might help to dispel prejudice. Obviously, among the major psychological needs of the prejudiced person would be his realization of the conflict in his motives and values. He would need to be shown that he both wants more pleasure in sex and that he thinks that sexual pleasure is

reprehensible. The puritanical "ideal" of the South would need to be weakened, and the myth of the sexual superiority of Negroes dispelled. If the preoccupation of the South with the Negro in general, and with the sexual habits of Negroes in particular, were eliminated, prejudice would be reduced. The Southerner needs first to be taught not to envy Negroes before he can learn not to hate and fear them. An open admiration, if it has a reasonable basis, is mentally healthy, but a secret, ungrounded envy—especially when it deals with so fundamental a general human desire as sex—is not.

Similarly in the case of the anti-Semite, the conflict of desires must be resolved before prejudice can be reduced. He needs to be shown that he likes and needs cities, and yet that he hates and fears them. He needs to learn to accept cities as a necessary part of modern civilization, and he needs to learn how to adjust to cities or to join movements for the elimination of their undesirable features. The Jews and the city should be disassociated in his mind—possibly by public emphasis on every effort of the Jew to regain a position on the land. Movies on the Palestinian settlements might be a soul-stirring revelation to anti-Semites well-intentioned enough not to dismiss it immediately as propaganda.

Of course, one must not exaggerate the effect of such measures. After all, a large part of anti-Semitism is based on envy of the Jew, and envy is not to be reduced by making the envied object—successful urban adjustment, that is—less enviable, but by making it more attainable.

This relates to the "frustration—aggression" theory. Frustration may be conceived of as supplying the energy, the motive force, for prejudice: symbolic association directs it against certain suitable groups. It would be naive to suggest that frustration can be reduced or symbolic associations dissolved simply by the presentation to consciousness of the real sources of frustration and the real meaning of the symbolic association. Both are products of long and complex historical developments, both require long and complex developments to eliminate them: just as getting over a neurosis may be as long and painful a process as acquiring it. Nevertheless, the attack on prejudice, like the analysis of it, must work on the basis of the desire of all sane men to be rational—albeit rational in their own peculiar way rather than in the view of the impartial observer.

LETTERS FROM READERS

For a Jewish-Arab Confederation

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Major Eban's important article, "The Future of Arab-Jewish Relations," in the September COMMENTARY, seems to me to be the best reasoned and in many ways most hopeful statement on this question which I have seen from an official Zionist source. It is to be hoped that it may become the starting-point for a fruitful discussion of this whole fateful problem of Jewish-Arab relations.

A substantial part of Major Eban's article is devoted to a critique of the approach to this problem on the part of the Ihud Association, of which I am proud to be chairman, and of some of my specific proposals for confederation between independent Arab and Jewish states in Palestine. In discussing it, it might be useful to state more fully what the Ihud program recommends.

At the beginning of June, 1948, I drafted a paper, under the title of *United States of Palestine—A Confederation of Two Independent States*, the text of which follows:

A. Political Union. The question to be answered during the coming four weeks of truce is, how to maintain the de facto existence of the State of Israel and at the same time reduce the Arab fears of partition or of this de facto state.

The one possible approach would seem to be the establishment of a confederation which would recognize the independence of the de facto State of Israel but which would on the other hand create a kind of federal union in political matters as well as in economic.

The resolutions of the United Nations Assembly on November 29, 1947 provided for a Federal Economic Board. The functions of the Board are described in detail in chapter 4D of the resolutions of November 29, 1947. There is, however, no chance of establishing this joint Economic Board if there is not also some kind of Federal Union in the political sense.

What may be some of the subjects reserved for the political center of a possible Confederation? Among these are: (1) foreign affairs; (2) defense; (3) international loans; (4) fed-

eral court; (5) protection of religious shrines and historical monuments and collections of cultural, artistic, and scientific importance.

Foreign Affairs. It might be dangerous to the peace of the Middle East if two tiny states, that of Israel and that of the Palestinian Arabs (with or without Transjordan), were to have the privilege of deciding upon their foreign affairs policies without reference to one another. In this event, it might well be possible that one state would have its orientation towards one of the great powers and the other state towards another of the great powers, thus converting the Palestinian area into a hotbed of imperial political rivalries. It should be made mandatory upon the two states at least to consult with one another on their foreign affairs policies, and even perhaps to insist that they arrive at these policies together. In case of disagreement the subject would be referred to a higher tribunal, presumably to the appropriate organ of the United Nations.

Among the political difficulties of such a concerted policy on foreign affairs would be the question of consular representation and of representation in the United Nations.

An answer to these difficulties might perhaps be found in the precedents set by the British Commonwealth and Empire and by the Soviet Union. The Dominions and some of the large constituent parts of the Soviet Union may, if they so decide, have their own consular representation and also their special representation in the UN. On the other hand, the British Commonwealth and Empire and the Soviet Union cover vast territories, whereas the State of Israel and the Palestinian Arab State are tiny in comparison.

It should be pointed out that in the old Austro-Hungarian state, Austria and Hungary were independent entities with separate parliaments, yet there were certain subjects reserved for the Council of Delegations. This consisted of delegates from the two parliaments who met for discussion and action on such reserved topics as foreign affairs, defense, and international loans. [Austria-Hungary is cited here as an interesting historical precedent and not necessarily as a model to be copied.]

Defense. Similar considerations apply to

the problem of defense. It might be dangerous to the peace of the Middle East if these two states were to arm against one another, or if they were to be armed by rival imperial powers. It should, therefore, be made mandatory upon them at least to consult on their defense policies and activities, and it would be better if working out a common defense policy were made imperative.

International Loans. Reference is made here to such international loans as are of importance and of benefit to the entire population of the two states, as for example, in connection with a possible Jordan Valley Authority. In the provisions for economic union, it is stated that each state "may conduct international financial operations on its own faith and credit." This should be taken to mean international financial operations which are to the benefit solely of the population of one or the other of the two states. Federal consultation and concerted action should be required, however, in relation to international financial operations which have to do with the improvement of the entire area for the benefit of all its inhabitants without regard to race, creed, or nationality.

Federal Court. This might be constituted of three Jews and three Arabs and a United Nations appointee who is to be chairman.

Among the subjects coming within the jurisdiction of the Federal Court would be:

(a) the constitutional interpretation of all questions in dispute between the two states in reference to agreements between them or the international conventions entered into by them, or other constitutional questions brought up by one state or the other;

(b) it should be the court of appeals on all questions of religious and minority and civil rights. Any citizen or resident of either of the states is to be privileged to appeal to the Federal Court in cases where he contends that his religious or minority or civil rights are invaded;

(c) the Federal Court might also serve as the High Court for the International City of Jerusalem.

Jerusalem. Jerusalem is to be constituted as a *corpus separatum*, as an international, demilitarized, neutralized city.

Yet at the same time it should serve as the capital of the Confederation. To this end a special enclave should be set aside in Jerusalem as the seat of the Confederation, of the Joint Economic Board, of the Federal Court, and of the authority, whatever it be, which is to be charged with the protection of holy places and religious sites, to which may be added historical monuments including archaeo-

logical excavations and cultural, artistic, and scientific collections. There may be other international or Confederation bodies which should have their seat in Jerusalem as the capital.

B. The name United States of Palestine is proposed as being somewhat analogous to the name United States of America. Here there are sovereign states whose sovereignty is nevertheless limited by their adherence to the Federal Union. The United States of America is a federal structure in which the sovereignty of the individual states is much more limited than would be the case in the Palestine Confederation, which nevertheless should be called the United States of Palestine.

C. *Immigration.* Inasmuch as immigration is usually the crux of the problem, it might be well to state that immigration regulations are to be made by either state autonomously. Provision should nevertheless be made for the time when this subject is also to be taken up within the framework of the Confederation.

The same as to land sales.

This paper was submitted to a number of persons, among others to the Jewish Agency, and it contains, in my opinion, the long-range policy along whose lines a permanent settlement could be achieved. It also had a rather wide circulation in the form of a "Second Draft," but the text I have here cited is that of the original draft, and from correspondence between us and from his article, the difference between Major Eban's point of view and mine becomes clear. Major Eban sees hope for Jewish-Arab cooperation upon the basis of free regional union, and he is sceptical of achieving cooperation through any kind of statutory political union, even Confederation, which in the *Encyclopaedia of Social Science* is defined as "a federation of existing governments without impairment of their sovereignty" (see article "Federation").

It would indeed be excellent and highly to be preferred, if there could be cooperation between the government of Israel and other governments in the same region without statutory political union. (As examples, the Benelux Union or the British Commonwealth.) One of the great achievements of history is the informal basis of union of the British Commonwealth and Empire as expressed in the Statute of Westminster. This is a union (despite the term "statute") by consent and without statutory obligations. The Benelux Union is a similar achievement. Is an understanding by consent and without formal statutory obligations now achievable as between Israel and neighboring countries?

In my opinion it is not. The psychological background for this is unfortunately lacking. Had the Jewish Agency all through the years made one single sincere and systematic attempt at understanding and conciliation and had it not rejected and frustrated the efforts made by others, and had this frightful, needless war with its legacies of hatred and ill-will on both sides not intervened, there might perhaps have been some slight chance of Jewish-Arab cooperation without formal and binding statutory obligations. As it is, we shall be very fortunate if we can bring about cooperation through some formal confederation, whether we label the idea of confederation as belonging to the 19th or the 20th century.

The idea of confederation has a special appeal to the American mind. The United States of America is the largest and most successful confederation of sovereign states in history. The constitution-makers of the new Palestine may well use as primary sources both as to terminology and as to substance the American Articles of Confederation of 1777, which, because of defects discovered in practice, led to the Constitution of 1787. A thorough study of *The Federalist* of James Madison, John Jay, and Alexander Hamilton would be illuminating for the Palestine Confederation. The American tendency towards confederation is seen in the recent 20th-century vote in Newfoundland in favor of confederation with Canada. In announcing the United States government's support of the idea of an Assembly for Western Europe, the State Department declared: "This government strongly favors the progressively closer integration of the free nations of Western Europe."

It is to be welcomed that the Israel government has proposed direct negotiations with the Arabs for a peaceful settlement of the whole Palestine problem. They know, even if other patriots, particularly outside of Palestine, do not, that there is but very little chance for Israel if the war is to be kept up indefinitely. Yet the Israeli offer of a peace settlement is here again defective in that it is vague, not indicating to the Arabs along what lines the peace discussion is to be carried on. In this regard the proposals of Count Bernadotte, the UN Mediator, have the advantage of being clear and definite, "statutory" if you will.

It will be seen that my early June draft for a Palestine Confederation agrees very largely with the July suggestions of the Mediator. The chief difference is in regard to Jerusalem, which I propose should be the capital of the Confederation in addition to being demilitarized and neutralized as an international city.

Other points of possible controversy are my

proposals for a concerted foreign policy and for common measures of defense. These would, it is true, restrict the sovereignty of the State of Israel; and it is understandable that a new and tiny state should be very sensitive about the necessity of any self-limitation of its sovereignty. But the UN proposal for an Economic Union and for a Governor of the International Jerusalem was such a restriction.

In these days of striving towards the ideal of the United Nations and of the actual hegemony of the great powers, the small nations have not as a fact and in practice unrestricted sovereignty. The Benelux model, however desirable as an abstraction, does not solve the main difficulties of Palestine. A coordinated foreign policy is not an essential in Benelux because it is well-nigh inconceivable that two antagonistic great powers would ever try to play Belgium and the Netherlands off against one another. They do not require statutory coordination in their foreign policies because their own common interests in this domain have long been well established. This is not the case in the Middle East, where conflicting economic and political interests might at any moment incite and take advantage of national rivalries. In Palestine today the saying is current that the Jews have been more or less the pawns of American interests and the Arabs the pawns of British interests; and the question is asked if Russia's interest in unrest and instability in the Middle East is not clearer and perhaps more permanent than her present support of a Jewish state. In this connection a study of the establishment and the recognition of the various "independent" small states during the years of the war might be a profitable exercise.

Nor will it do to say that immigration is something which concerns only the Jews and the Jewish state. We see that it *does* concern the Arabs of Palestine and neighboring countries just as it concerns the countries which Jewish immigrants are leaving or those countries other than Palestine which they are about to enter, including the United States. The mass immigration of tens of thousands of men, women, and children does not take place in a vacuum. Such a movement of human beings has its military, economic, social, and political repercussions all over the world and not least in the countries neighboring Palestine.

In a recent statement of the Ihud, it was stated that some element of international regulation would be required in relation to immigration. This is necessary in view of the conflicts which might arise by reason of the two main elements in the problem: first, the incontestable need of Jews for immigration, and second, the equally incontestable fact that

Jewish immigration to Palestine concerns not only the Jews and Jewish territory but also the Arab peoples.

For this reason Count Bernadotte's suggestions appear to me to be eminently reasonable: that there be free Jewish immigration for two years, during which time it may be anticipated that the Cyprus refugees and the DP's of Europe may, with international help, be integrated into the economy of Palestine, and that thereafter these questions be determined within the Confederation, or in case of irreconcilable conflict by the United Nations. The same as to land ownership.

In other words, questions of foreign policy, defense, immigration, and land ownership would in the last analysis be met under United Nations auspices if they could not be met, as is to be preferred, by direct understanding between the independent members of the Confederation.

Major Eban is right, it seems to me, in advocating a wide Middle East background as necessary and favorable to a permanent peaceful solution of the Palestine problem. He is right also in declaring that this background should be regional and not just racial, i.e., that Israel should be linked up not just with Arab and Moslem countries, but with all the various countries of the Middle East. It is to be regretted that the UN organization is not more generally built up on the regional idea. During the war, while the discussion concerning the United Nations was going on, the regional idea played a prominent part in the minds of those who eventually established the United Nations. There is every reason from the Jewish point of view to strive for a wide Middle East regional organization as part of the United Nations. Whereas there would be a great and perhaps decisive role for the Jews in this great undertaking, we should not forget that our first task is to try to bring about cooperation in all fields between the two peoples, the Jews and the Arabs, who alone remain as the descendants of the Semitic peoples of antiquity.

I should like to conclude with a word as to the question of the Arab refugees. There are many facets to the problem—military, political, humanitarian. Doubtless a very cogent case can be made out for meeting this problem from one of these points of view or another. It seems to me that any attempt to meet so vast a human situation except from the humane, the moral point of view will lead us into a morass. If the archives of the last war could yield all their secrets, we should doubtless find very able memoranda showing the advantage

to certain countries of using displaced persons for the military, industrial, or political advantage of this or that state. I find it difficult also to reconcile the present attitude of the Israeli government in relation to the Arab refugees with its repeated statements that it is not the Arabs of Palestine, but only the neighboring Arab countries who are to blame for the outbreak of a Jewish-Arab war. If the Palestine Arabs left their homesteads "voluntarily" under the impact of Arab propaganda and in a veritable panic, one may not forget that the most potent argument in this propaganda was the fear of a repetition of the Irgun-Stern atrocities at Deir Yassin, where the Jewish authorities were unable or unwilling to prevent the act or punish the guilty. It is unfortunate that the very men who could point to the tragedy of Jewish DP's as the chief argument for mass immigration into Palestine should now be ready, as far as the world knows, to help create an additional category of DP's in the Holy Land.

JUDAH L. MAGNES

New York City

P. S. My letter in response to Major Eban's article was written before the assassination of Count Bernadotte. I have today written the following personal comment, which I trust you will find space to print, and which I have also sent to the *New York Times*.

Count Bernadotte had come closer than any other man to bringing Jews and Arabs to an understanding, and his murder is a tragedy of historic importance for both peoples.

In a press statement issued August 23, 1948 I stated that Count Bernadotte had "done more to advance the cause of peace and conciliation in Palestine than all other persons put together," and I expressed the conviction that in all future discussions concerned with peace and reconciliation in the Holy Land, most of the suggestions advanced by Count Bernadotte would continue to serve as a basis for discussion.

At a crucial moment, this great task of peace-making has been deprived of Bernadotte's integrity of heart and mind and the great store of insight he had accumulated regarding personalities and other important factors involved.

It is very easy to join in the cry that Jewish terrorists are responsible for this atrocious crime. But who has been responsible for the terrorists? We all bear some responsibility. Certainly the large number of American supporters of terror in Palestine do—the senators and congressmen, the newspaper publishers and

the large number of Jews and others who have supported terrorists morally and financially.

A large measure of responsibility must also fall upon those official circles in Israel who at one time and another carried on joint activities with terrorist groups, and instead of suppressing them, came to an understanding with them, incorporating them into the armed forces.

A large share of the blame is to be attributed to the recklessness of the charges made in Palestine and elsewhere against Bernadotte's honesty and good faith, charges which accused him of acting as the prejudiced agent of "the British" or of "British-American imperialism" or of "the oil interests."

Dr. Bunche has been burdened with an almost impossible task. He deserves the wholehearted support of all men of good will in carrying to completion Bernadotte's efforts at peace-making.

J. L. M.

September 20, 1948

The Question of Mass Culture

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The only real point in Harold Rosenberg's article "The Herd of Independent Minds" (in the September COMMENTARY) is a truism: that all men are different, and that therefore any general statement about human beings necessarily misses the essential truth about any individual. In order to use this undeniable fact as a stick to beat the intellectuals, Mr. Rosenberg makes a distinction between "common experience" and "the common situation." In the context of Mr. Rosenberg's article, this distinction is purely verbal. If a number of men have lived through "the War" or "the Plan" or "the 30's" and speak of themselves as having had a common experience, they probably do not mean that their lives are interchangeable. Mr. Rosenberg may be right in feeling that it would be better for them to speak of having been in a "common situation," and thus to express more sharply the separateness of their personalities. But this is merely a point of language; the peculiar confusion of Mr. Rosenberg's article arises from his attempt to make it something more. The final effect of this confusion, taken seriously, would be to deny the possibility of all expository and analytical writing.

In discussing *Partisan Review*, Mr. Rosenberg makes the vulgar assumption—typical of "middle-brow" culture—that to say Dostoevsky and Kafka were neurotic implies a condemnation of their art. He then takes three sentences in three book reviews (badly misinterpreting at least two) as representative of what he

chooses to call "the" *Partisan Review*; apparently, though I am not to be permitted to say "we," it is Mr. Rosenberg's privilege to say "they." Then, in writing of a poem by Stephen Spender, he commits precisely the fault that he has objected to in "the" *Partisan Review*: he raises moral objections to a work of art, castigating Spender for having feelings that he disapproves of, just as earlier in the article he condemns all those who conceive of the sense of alienation as a form of pathos. (Apart from its irrelevance to Spender's poem, this attitude is surprising in so great an admirer of Kafka.)

I am particularly at a loss to discover Mr. Rosenberg's grounds for criticism of my own article, "The Legacy of the 30's" (December 1947). I rejoice that Mr. Rosenberg is interested in the Old Testament and the Gospels, Plato, 18th-century music, Poe, Rimbaud, Dostoevsky, Gide, Miró, Klee, William Carlos Williams, Wallace Stevens, and E. E. Cummings. I didn't say he wasn't. It is also interesting to learn that he finds *Finnegan's Wake* more communicative than *Memoirs of Hecate County*. Since I find *Memoirs of Hecate County* extremely communicative, and since I have not said anything about *Finnegan's Wake*, it is possible that I am one up on Mr. Rosenberg. But all this has little to do with my article, which was an attempt to show that the intellectual atmosphere created by the Communist movement in the 1930's was one of the latest, and in some ways one of the more important, in a chain of causes that has had a paralyzing effect on American culture.

I believe Mr. Rosenberg failed to understand my article; this seems the only possible explanation for the fact that he appropriates the ideas of the article and tries to use them against me. Thus, in attempting to demonstrate that I am wrong in saying that the experience of Communism was "crucial," Mr. Rosenberg writes: ". . . Marxism in the United States became a renunciation or negation of experience, a plunging of the individual into mass inertia, precisely because he yielded himself up to the general intellectual 'climate.'" This is a fairly clear restatement of the main point of my article. Again, in discussing the creative artist's relationship to experience, Mr. Rosenberg writes: ". . . to penetrate through the common experience to the actual common situation requires a creative act—that is to say an act that directly grasps the life of the people during, say, the War or the Plan, that grasps the War from the inside, so to speak, as a situation with a human being in it." In that portion of my article which dealt with Lionel Trilling's novel, *The Middle of the Journey*,

I wrote: "... the novel as an art form rests on particularity: the particular becomes universal without losing its particularity—that is the wonder. Mr. Trilling might have come closer to the 'essence' of the experience he describes if he had been more willing to see it as the experience of particular human beings in a specific situation; perhaps this means: if he had been more willing to face his own relationship to it."

This apparent failure to understand seems even to verge on disingenuousness when I observe that Mr. Rosenberg writes most of the time as if I had insisted that everyone should read Lionel Trilling's novel because it is about Communism in the 30's. The fact that I did not like the novel is buried in a subordinate clause, and readers of Mr. Rosenberg's article who have not read mine are hardly likely to suspect that I devoted about one-third of it to a criticism of Mr. Trilling's novel precisely on the ground that it dealt with the Communist movement as a moral abstraction rather than as "a situation with a human being in it."

ROBERT WARSHOW

New York City

Sephardim and Ashkenazim

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I read with the greatest interest Professor Heschel's illuminating and discriminating remarks on "The Two Great Traditions," that of the Ashkenazim and that of the Sephardim, in his fine article in the May COMMENTARY, and I do not intend now to take issue with his main thesis. But there is a special point of emphasis on which I wish to make a short comment.

Dr. Heschel writes: "In consequence, the modern Ashkenazic Jew, particularly in Central Europe, often came to lose his appreciation of the value of his own original way of life." It may be worthwhile to quote Leopold Zunz, a prototype of Western Jewry and even a pioneer of moderate Reform, who wrote on this very subject as early as 1845 in his book *Zur Geschichte und Literatur*: "... If that theatre [of Jewish Ashkenazic culture] has been overlooked or treated as a stepchild even by Jewish historians, it was not the brilliance of the Sephardim . . . and not the rareness of certain products of French-Jewish [i.e. Ashkenazic] literature that hindered them from seeing, but it was their reaction against the specifically Jewish character [my italics—E.S.], a reaction which made its impact as a corollary of the Enlightenment. This reaction seemed to me an offensive injustice when I came to issue my *Life of Rashi* [1822]. Later scholars also

are beginning to admit this. For it was the German and French Jews who, not having received their original spiritual stimulation from the Arabs, were the chief creators of the national elements of the literature." (In the phrase "later scholars," Zunz is referring to Abraham Geiger.)

As to Hermann Cohen's essay on the Polish Jew, which Professor Heschel quotes as a further testimony for his criticism of later Central European Jewry, two things may be said. Firstly that the general trend of Cohen's appraisal is a very positive one; he expresses his boundless admiration for the "superhuman power of suffering" of the East European Jew and his sincere regret that the West European Jew did not inherit his full share of the Talmudic dialectics (*Juedische Schriften*, II, 169, Berlin 1924). And secondly: Franz Rosenzweig, who knew best the personality of the old Cohen, explains his passionate hatred against Spinoza as arising from the difference of temper between "the hot Ashkenazi [Cohen] whose heart was always penetrated by waves of compassion and pity (which affections Spinoza had despised), and the Sephardic late-comer [Spinoza] who had been burned out by the suffering of long generations" (Rosenzweig's introduction to Cohen's *Juedische Schriften*).

It seems to be clear, therefore, that as far as Professor Heschel's criticism of late Middle European Jewry goes, it was consciously dealt with by prominent spiritual leaders of that Jewry itself, such as Zunz, Geiger, Cohen, and Rosenzweig.

ERNST SIMON

New York City

On the Plus Side

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

To this non-intellectual mind, "The Voice of the Blood" by Ralph Manheim, in your August issue, is the most absorbing bit of fiction that has appeared for some time. If a better short story can be written, maybe COMMENTARY will publish it. . . .

DEWITT GUTMAN

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I very much enjoyed Harold Orlansky's article, "Destiny in the Nursery," in the June COMMENTARY, and congratulate you on including such an excellent analysis of a rather complicated situation, usually presented only from the opposite point of view.

LOUISE BATES AMES

Clinic of Child Development
Yale University

BOOKS IN REVIEW

Nightmare and Redemption

THE SLEEPWALKERS. By HERMANN BROCH. Translated by Willa and Edwin Muir. New York, Pantheon, 1948. 648 pp. \$5.00.

Reviewed by STEPHEN SPENDER

I FIRST read *The Sleepwalkers* when it appeared in this magnificent translation of Edwin and Willa Muir, in 1932. Since then, it has been an experience which has lingered in my mind and which I have meant to go back to. But an uneasy fear that I might be disappointed, that I might feel that this trilogy was chaotic, has held me back until a few days ago.

On re-reading this book, I find that it is one of the few really original and thoughtful novels of this century. If it owes a good deal to Joyce and Proust, then Broch has transformed their interior techniques and many-faceted sensibilities into something as harshly German as the painting of Bosch. For him art is not an end, it is an instrument of language which transforms the crudest, ugliest reality of actuality into another reality of religious vision. The great difference between the French and the Germanic genius lies really in this: to the French art is an end which transforms experience, insofar as it is contained in art, into an aesthetic object, so that the aim of life itself can appear as the transforming of real experience into such objects of contemplation and enjoyment. To the Germanic genius art is an intermediary, a kind of funnel which connects hell with heaven, heaven with hell. The basest material, in Gruenewald, Bosch, Brueghel, or even Klee goes into the machine at one end, and is sublimated into the divine at the other. So that if I go on to criticize *The Sleepwalkers* as an imperfect work of art, in which several stories having no interior relationship with each other, but only an external parallelism, are tacked to-

gether, and into which a philosophic essay is inserted with a crudity even more obvious than Tolstoy's reflections on history in *War and Peace*; when I have said all this, I must add that these apparent artistic defects add to the impressiveness of Broch's whole achievement in imposing a philosophic message upon his massive material. This is a novel hewn out of the life of the years between 1890 and 1920 which leads into a view of history wider than political theories.

THE theme of all novels is, I suppose, change. But what holds together the very disparate times and plots of Broch's novel is his preoccupation with the conditions which produce very intensive change in his characters, complete changes of personality, almost the change of one character into another, the change of the individual into historic event, the change of consciousness into dream, and of life into death.

His characters are sleepwalkers because their own lives are shaped by the forces of the nightmare reality in which they live. A Marxist would define this reality as the breakdown of German capitalist-materialism during the years 1880-1920. But to Broch, the social forces are themselves only one element of a far profounder breakdown of the whole of modern life, a breakdown which consists of the disruption of the idea of man as a being who lives by faith in God, into the idea of him as a specialized function who devotes his life to becoming the logic which modern society requires of him: "In this absolute devotion to logical rigor, the Western world has won its achievements, . . . and with the same thoroughness, the absolute thoroughness that abrogates itself, must it eventually advance *ad absurdum*: war is war, *l'art pour l'art*, in politics there's no room for compunction, business is business, . . . all these signify the same thing, all these appertain to the same aggressive and radical spirit, informed by that uncanny, I might almost say that metaphysical, lack of

consideration for consequences, that ruthless logic directed on the object and the object alone, which looks neither to right nor to left; and this, all this, is the style of thinking that characterizes our age."

Thus Broch's characters are driven by two forces pulling in opposite directions: the ruthless logic of becoming their social function and their unavoidable religious vocation as human beings.

THE first section of the trilogy, *The Romantic*, is in some ways the strangest and most dreamlike. On the surface it is the love story of a young officer, Joachim von Pasenow, with Elizabeth, the girl who afterwards becomes his wife but who really loves and is loved by Joachim's best friend, Bertrand, who is a homosexual. Broch's extraordinary power is perhaps best shown by his ability to make his most stupid-seeming characters those who in the long run are most able to be transformed by events. Joachim von Pasenow seems a singularly stupid and suspicious man, who is unable to love either his friend or his wife, and who has the rigidity of the Prussian conception of honor. But it is his very inability to understand, his bewilderment, which opens his mind to visions, to the transformation of his fiancée into her surroundings: "Now an almost insoluble problem confronted him, and it was no use trying to decipher it in Elizabeth's face, for her face itself constituted the problem. Lying back in her chair, she was gazing at the autumn landscape, and her up-tilted face, thrown back almost at a right angle to the taut line of the throat, was like an irregular roof set upon the pillar of her neck. One could perhaps say just as well that it rested like a leaf on the calyx of her throat, or that it was a lid covering the throat, for it was really no longer a face, merely a continuation of the throat, an extension of the throat, with a far-off resemblance to the head of a serpent. . . . He shut his eyelids a little and peered through the slits at the landscape of that extended face. It blended at once with the real landscape, the woodland verge of the hair bordered the yellowing leaves of the forest, and the glass balls that decorated the rosebeds in the garden glittered with the same light as the jewel that in the shadow of the cheek—ah, was it still a cheek?—shone as an earring. This was both startling and comforting, and when the eye combined these separate

things into a unity so strange, past all disjoining, one was curiously reminded of something, transposed into some mode that lay beyond convention far back in childhood, and the unsolved riddle was like a sign that had emerged from the sea of memory."

This elaborate image beautifully illustrates the change which is preparing itself under the uniform surface of the Prussia of 1880. The whole of Joachim's world is haunted by a strange uncertainty, where, in this book, the most ambivalent character, Bertrand, hovering between the two sexes, becomes almost a point of security, because he accepts in his own personality the principle of transformation.

It is in the second part, *The Anarchist*, that Hermann Broch creates his most memorable character, the clerk Esch, who is the true hero of *The Sleepwalkers*. Esch, the philanderer, the immoral moralist who wants to make the columns of his accounts balance, the drifter whose eyes are opened to the injustices of society by the imprisonment of Martin Geyring, the trades-union agitator; Esch, who becomes the mother and the lover of Mother Hentjen, the restaurant proprietress, who attacks Bertrand because he is head of the Rhine Shipping Company, and who finally joins the Bible-reading group of Major von Pasenow: he is the most curious, poetic, and convincing of Broch's inventions. Like von Pasenow he is a very stupid man who is reserved by life nevertheless for the most illuminating revelations, because he is made as it were of stubborn granite, honest material upon which events hew the form of his character.

The pages which describe Esch's journey with Mother Hentjen down the Rhine are among the most beautiful in the book, immensely moving in their mixture of detached irony and sympathy. Here Broch is perhaps at his best. The extraordinary scene between Esch and Bertrand has a dreamlike intensity but it seems to press, as do several other passages, beyond the limits of that which can be expressed in fiction. There is a certain repetitiousness in *The Sleepwalkers* which seems to arise from the author not being able to say something, which he therefore tries to express in a dozen different ways. Perhaps as a counsel of despair, he resorts in the last volume to a philosophical journal which is introduced in fragments into the story, without

any explanation as to its connection with the action.

THIS journal is so remarkably interesting in what it says, that one can almost forgive its inartistic intrusiveness. Yet it is not a completely successful device, because although it says much which is related to the theme of the novel, the lack of any dramatic relation to the action leaves the reader at a loss. To borrow a phrase from painting, it has no tonal relation to the other tones of the canvas. It is not within the character of any of the persons whom Hermann Broch has created, and it therefore remains stubbornly outside the rest of the novel. In itself, considered outside the novel, it is intensely interesting: but within the novel it remains a lecture, interrupting the course of the action, and therefore difficult to read.

The description of the breakdown of 1918 Germany in the last part of the trilogy reads strangely true today, not just of Germany, but of the world. Broch shows here that he is a great writer of scenes of war and revolution. The character of Hugenu, the Alsatian deserter who becomes editor of the *Kur Trier Herald*, who instinctively and almost unconsciously supports every cause which supports his own interests, is a terrifying characterization of the post-war profiteer. And the drawing together of the two great stupid men, von Pasenow and Esch, symbols of the Germany which raised money for war by people subscribing a mark for the privilege of hammering a nail into a wooden figurehead of Marshal von Hindenburg, symbolizes, with their death after religious conversion, the theme of redemption which is the ultimate transformation of the sleepwalkers.

THIS difficult, beautiful, highly intelligent novel is, with all its imperfections, a masterpiece. Amongst its imperfections, one must count the fact that certain of the characters, particularly Elizabeth and Bertrand, are unconvincing, because although they exist on the level of a hallucinated reality, they seem hardly to have a convincing material existence. With some hesitation, I also consider the philosophic journal a defect. Among Broch's great achievements are the creation of the characters of Esch and Hugenu, worthy to exist beside Stephen Dedalus and Molly Bloom, and less "literary" than either of them:

the creation of a massive historic scene; and the description of states of consciousness where human life seems trembling upon the edge of a significance wider than that of the individual.

A Dissent on "Popularization"

PATHWAYS THROUGH THE BIBLE. By MORTIMER J. COHEN. Philadelphia, The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1946. 548 pp. \$3.00.

A HISTORY OF THE JEWS from the Babylonian Exile to the End of World War II. By SOLOMON GRAYZEL. Philadelphia, The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1947. 835 pp. \$3.50.

Reviewed by DAVID BAUMGARDT

MORTIMER J. COHEN's *Kinderbibel* and Solomon Grayzel's history of the Jews for the common man compare favorably with that vast body of well-intentioned popularizing literature that is, according to Henry J. Cadbury's pertinent phrase, totally unaware of the "peril of modernizing." But to compare favorably is not to be blameless.

These two books are but two more examples based on a strange theory of popularization: a theory that holds it self-evident that the average juvenile or grown-up American Jew prefers clichés built on other clichés—as against any fresh, independent thought, feeling, or insight—and considers an easy flow of familiar sounds the prime criterion of literary value.

Dr. Cohen assures us, for instance, that the differentiation of languages at the Tower of Babel was meant to restrain the nations from doing wrong to each other. Yet it is generally believed, certainly with no less reason, that the confusion of tongues encourages strife. After Jacob wrestled with the angel, we are told, he was named "Israel, Champion of God; for you have struggled with God and with men and have prevailed." Why someone's opponent should be called his champion is a mystery Dr. Cohen does not explain. And, like so many Protestant writers of the last century, Dr. Cohen supplants the God of wrath almost completely with the God of kindness and love. But whereas Isaac Watts took great pains to rewrite those Psalms that seemed to him irreconcilable with the idea of absolute divine love, in this book these Psalms are—along with similar ma-

terial—simply omitted. Jeremiah, we hear, was indeed “of an intensely religious temperament”; and we are reassured about Koheleth’s pessimism with a quotation from an “English poet”: “If winter comes, can spring be far behind?”

The illustrations of *Pathways Through the Bible*, contributed by Arthur Szyk, along with a very moving dedication, are certainly superior to the textual comments of the editor.

DR. GRAYZEL’S *History of the Jews* stands on practically the same level as Dr. Cohen’s popularized Bible. We learn, for example, that the Christian apostle Paul was “a very interesting man” who “saw in Jesus a great attraction to the pagan world,” that the Jews “decided” long before the 18th century that Christian civilization, “which had excluded them and treated them with such cruelty, could have nothing worthwhile for them,” and that Rashi’s object, in his commentaries on the Bible, “was not to show how learned or clever he was, but rather to guide the student through difficult passages.”

What is wrong with statements of this kind? Are the “facts and figures” in them incorrect? No, this is not the point. Even if all the facts and figures in these popular histories were entirely correct, something would remain that is far more fundamentally wrong with them: namely, the limited range of their intellectual and emotional response to the personalities, events, and ideas they undertake to present.

Who knows: one day when the arbiters of our cultural and “moral” fashions decide that smart manners are the only thing that counts, God may come to be praised in Jewish prayer-books for his “perfect manners,” his “perfect self-control”; and the reformer of old prayer-texts may justify his modernization by reference to *Mishnah Aboth*, chap. V, Mishnah II, where the characteristics of the Hasid are said to be that he is “hard to anger and easy to pacify.” Certainly we may expect some such thing if blind and provincial adaptation to the most trivial and transient emotional notions of value continues to permeate most of our popularizing literature today.

THE revolting, barbarous indifference of the Evian and Bermuda conferences towards the Jewish victims of Nazism is, for instance, twice described by Dr. Grayzel as a “lack of decency”—certainly a conspicuous understatement. But, on the other hand, his whole volume is filled with high-flown and conventional overstate-

ments about the eternal martyrdom of the Jews, which made “Jewish hearts [in Europe] tremble with foreboding” even at the beginning of the 20th century.

Or to return to Dr. Grayzel’s remark on Rashi: one can praise a *yeshivah bohur* by allowing that he does not indulge in hair-splitting, in *pilpul*. But what kind of praise is this for the warmth, the homely wisdom, and penetrating straightforwardness of Rashi’s immortal comments on the Torah! And the Apostle Paul! One may hate him, as Nietzsche and Jeremy Bentham and many Jews have done; but this hatred still pays some tribute to his “revolutionary”—or “pernicious”—greatness. To call him an “interesting man” reveals a much greater lack of perception on the part of the historian than any abuse showered on Paul by his most violent opponents.

Kierkegaard once warned against confusing an “apostle” with a “genius”—the apostle being infinitely superior to any genius. What would the great Danish thinker have had to say about identifying an apostle as an “interesting” lecturer and as the propagator of the teachings of another “attractive” religious author! Surely, no misstatements of fact could disqualify a historian as much as does this dull and mediocre unawareness of the intellectual and social subtlety of great historical phenomena and this complete lack of adequate emotional reaction.

And along with these banalities, Dr. Grayzel gives us statements whose factual correctness is rather questionable. Of Philo of Alexandria, it is said that he was “the best interpreter of Plato’s philosophy, at that time the basis of thinking in the Greek and Roman world.” The *Zohar*, which, as Dr. Grayzel grants, “contains some illuminating passages,” is said to inspire us primarily with the “definite assurance of God’s interest” in the Jews. It seems pretty difficult to reconcile this statement with the *Zohar*’s doctrine of the “mysterious fissure” in God’s life and action that prevents the “continuous union of God and the Shekhinah” in the present unredeemed state of the world (see Scholem’s *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*). The German poet and friend of Moses Mendelssohn, Lessing, who was definitely of middle-class origin, is called a German aristocrat—and so on, and so on.

ALAS, with their almost exclusive emphasis on “felicity of expression” and “readability,” Dr. Cohen and Dr. Grayzel join an unfortunate

and ever increasing contemporary tendency. Even the venerable old *London Times Literary Supplement* a few weeks ago asserted that the world needs more writers of the type of Ruskin and fewer of the type of the Schlegel brothers, who, though learned, lack "judgment." The *Times* forgets that August Wilhelm Schlegel, responsible for some of the greatest masterpieces of translation, as well as his brother Friedrich, surpassed Ruskin not only in learning but also in boldness of literary judgment and taste, even though his and his brother's works may not be as "readable" as Ruskin. The *American Scholar* recently declaimed no less strangely—on behalf of scholarship and education—against emphasis on scholarly research in American universities. And in a recent number of *COMMENTARY* Cecil Roth demanded that, if not for "Central Europeans," at least for persons who speak and read "the language of Gibbon and Motley," a scholarly book should be readable above all.

WHAT does this mean—this great stress on readability? Is readability to be identified with hackneyed phraseology and watered-down thinking? I, for one, am sure that many of the "unreadable" Jewish thinkers of Central Europe, such as David and Karl Joel, Samson Raphael Hirsch, and Hermann Cohen—not to mention Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud—will survive most of the mass-produced "readable" literature destined for the consumption of our Western Jewry. And I, for one, feel particularly repentant for the time I spent in the reading of all those books recommended as being especially readable. At any rate, if so much praise is bestowed on the imitators of Gibbon and Motley and the only too "readable" compilers of popular Jewish histories and Bible texts, why not dedicate at least a little bit of space to those who take their delight in the prose of the less readable Lord Acton, Walter Pater, Thomas de Quincey, William Blake, and the aged Jeremy Bentham?

I am told on the best authority that it is becoming less and less possible to publish philosophical, historical, or other scholarly books in the humanities unless they appeal spectacularly to the so-called "intelligent" common reader. If we continue in this direction, I wonder whether Western Jewry will, after all, become the intellectual heir of Central and East European Judaism—as it should, nay must do, if Judaism is to survive.

Bridge to the Near East

FAREWELL TO SALONIKA: PORTRAIT OF AN ERA. By LEON SCIAKY. New York, A. A. Wyn, 1946. 241 pp. \$2.75.

THE MEDITERRANEAN: ITS ROLE IN AMERICA'S FOREIGN POLICY. By WILLIAM REITZEL. New York; Harcourt, Brace, 1948. 195 pp. \$2.75.

Reviewed by HAL LEHRMAN

I REMEMBER Salonika no earlier than 1945, when the stage was already being set for correspondent George Polk's murder, with royalist "X" gangs cavorting in the city and ELAS guerrillas regrouping in the hills. Some 850 Jewish survivors were straggling back to the onetime Sephardic capital from which 43,000 souls had gone forth only two years earlier in cattle cars to the "Jewish resettlement territories" promised by the Nazis near the gas-chambers of Oswiecim. Hebrew-lettered memorial stones from the historic communal cemetery still lay where the Germans had converted them into paving-blocks for public roadways and urinals. The modern lower town, populated by British troops in jeeps and lean Greeks in wornout shoes, seemed to be expiring from dejection; high above, around the fragments of the Turko-Byzantine-Crusader fortress walls, the ancient upper town slumbered uneasily, retaining of its antique past only the squalor.

But Leon Sciaky remembers Salonika as the trade metropolis of the Eastern Mediterranean, city of Oriental pageantry, pearl in the Caliph's turban. Born at the century's turn, in the dying hours of the Ottoman Empire, Sciaky knew Salonika when it was the diligent marketplace of the Balkan hinterland, its many-tongued people bartering in Turkish, Spanish, and Bulgar accents. Today the Turkish remnants of the World War's mass migrations exist only as primitive Moslem islands in the villages of Thrace, the Spanish-speaking Jewish community is barely pulling itself back from the edge of the grave, the Bulgars are rebels in the Macedonian mountains or fugitives on Georgi Dimitrov's side of the angry frontier. Kilkis, now a Greek garrison town defended by British-trained, American-equipped Greek troops against Greek partisans and their Slavic

allies, was in Sciaky's time a happily obscure, Bulgarian-populated village whose shearers of sheep and spinners of wool lived out their earthy lives with only their Turkish *bey* and his demands for tribute to offend them. In a flawless English prose counterpointed with resonant borrowings from a half-dozen Mediterranean languages, Sciaky tells a magic tale of his boyhood and youth, a chronicle rich in the imagery of Isabella and Abdul Hamid, a testament to the lost tranquility of Christian and Jew and Moslem dwelling side by side in simple tribal tolerance, a "portrait of an era" as vanished as the Periclean Age.

EVEN Sciaky stayed too long. Before he said a final farewell to sail for New York and a new life where "everything was possible, everything except quiet," he had seen the beginning of World War I and the beginning of the end of Salonika's idyll. The first half of his story, reconstructed from the golden haze of childhood and centered on the epic figure of "Nono," his merchant-seigneur grandfather, is a poem of serenity only briefly disturbed by drought, earthquake, and the boredom of the schoolroom. But as the little boy gropes toward adolescence, the tumult of the world crowds in.

Macedonian patriots rent a grocery store on Colombo Street, where all day they discourage customers by charging absurdly high prices and all night they dig underground until, after months of burrowing to the other side of the road, they haul two hundred and fifty pounds of nitroglycerine through their hand-carved tunnel and blow up the Imperial Ottoman Bank. Turkish cavalry and Bulgar *comitadji* shatter the land with sword and grenade. Then the Turks themselves rise against the oppression of Istanbul. When the treacherous Abdul foments a counter-revolution against the victorious Young Turks, an army corps from Salonika marches to the Bosphorus and brings the Sultan back to exile in a villa just outside the city. But once in power, the Young Turks degenerate too, and the minorities who hailed their advent now plot their downfall. There follow the Balkan Wars. In the first, the Turks are pushed back to the boundary of Europe. In the second the Serbs and Greeks unite to expel their former Bulgar ally from the Vardar and the Aegean. Salonika becomes Greek, a transformation which Sciaky does not enthusiastically approve, either then or now.

Indeed, the Greeks rate scarcely any mention in the author's early tableau of Salonika's cosmopolitanism, and in his narrative of Ottoman decline the Greeks are dismissed almost as interlopers. The Bulgars come off much better and, surprisingly, even the Turks are gently treated. Turkish rule may have been heavy-handed, but Sciaky nevertheless gives credit to the Sultans for their traditional hospitality toward minorities and for their system of *millets* which permitted each subject nationality to preserve its proud identity. One hears a different story in present-day Greece, but Sciaky implies that the travail of the modern Balkans really began when the Greeks turned their arms against the Bulgars. He seems almost to be yearning for the good old days when all peoples bowed to the tyrannous Turk but at least lived complacently with each other beneath the common yoke, unembittered by contending sovereignties.

At any rate, it is clear that the outbreak of the Graeco-Bulgar vendetta did open a fresh and bloody chapter in Balkan history. When young Leon and his grandfather ride their horses through the desolate countryside after the Bulgarian rout, they find a devastation identical in all its harrowing particulars with the ruin so widespread there today. Whatever the past crimes of the Greeks, the score was better than balanced when the Bulgars, ravenous for booty from their alliance with Hitler, came down like wolves on northeastern Greece in 1941. Since then, Greek has turned even against Greek, while Greek and Bulgar are still reaching for each other's throats. And in the decades between Macedonia's liberation from the Turk and now, mighty Salonika has shrivelled from an imperial port to a petty prize of wrangling Balkan nationalists.

AT FIRST glance, William Reitzel's analysis of American policy in the Mediterranean appears to have nothing in common with Leon Sciaky's reminiscences except one geographical pinpoint. Sciaky writes to please and beguile; Reitzel, in his severe monograph for the Yale Institute of International Studies, employs an academic jargon which will repel all except specialists, although what he says deserves intense consideration by the widest possible audience. Where Sciaky focuses on Salonika and its environs, Reitzel ranges West and East from Spain to Iran, North and South from Milan to the Sahara. Where Sciaky uses word-

pictures and homely narrative to restore the intimate details of a vibrantly human community, Reitzel impersonally dissects global forces and lays bare the massive motives of power.

The fact is, however, that the two books complement each other admirably. Salonika contains the Mediterranean problem in microcosm, revealing the same human stresses in terms of the individual, family, and clan which the larger work examines with cold science in terms of economics, national rivalries, and world strategy. Sciaky closes, in effect, with an invocation to faith, hope, and charity to rescue mankind from its self-provoked destruction. Reitzel, on the other hand, suggests that the only effective way to avoid catastrophe is by accurate evaluation of causes and intelligent resolution in their avoidance.

The Yale study begins with a convincing demonstration, on the evidence of our diplomatic history and the recent record, that the United States simply had no Mediterranean policy prior to our wartime military intervention there, and that our action since then until lately has been largely improvisation, with no real awareness of our true national interests. This is no news to anyone who was in places like Turkey, Greece, Italy, and North Africa just before or after the end of the European war, but it is satisfying to see the proof in print for the persuasion of those doubters who will not relinquish the myth of devious State Department connivance on all fronts with the forces of evil.

Without taking sides or ever raising his voice, but merely by patient inspection of chronology, Reitzel then shows that the slow hardening of our Mediterranean attitude was directly due to our increasing recognition of the expansionist Soviet drive. This, too, is by itself no great revelation, but the fact needs to be emphasized for the many good people who put the cart before the horse and argue that Soviet aggressiveness is the effect, not the cause, of American policy. Totalitarian pressure was responsible for the steadily growing unity of Anglo-American power in the Mediterranean, but it was a power to which we made our contributions reluctantly and a unity which the United States doggedly declined to acknowledge so long as we could hope, however faintly, for Soviet cooperation in the making of the One World.

This One World no longer being achievable

in view of Soviet behavior, the great challenge to American policy-makers is how to keep the world from splitting neatly in two, since a world mobilized between a giant United States and a giant USSR must sooner or later explode into war. The Mediterranean thereby becomes a vital factor in prevention of a Two-World system. The American interest, as Reitzel sees it, demands the barring of the Soviets from further Mediterranean penetration. This can conceivably be obtained by tactical devices, such as the display of adequate military strength at the most threatened points, the shrewd use of the existing British framework of control throughout the area, and an emergency program of loans and economic aid wherever urgently required. But such a makeshift policy, Reitzel finds, can only be costly in the long run without achieving durable results. To make the Mediterranean really secure, a method must be devised to relieve and dispel its internal tensions, those economic stresses and political strains which render the whole area vulnerable to totalitarian infiltration.

What is needed, first of all, is a *regional* approach, a policy which understands that the entire Mediterranean, despite the diversity of its component parts, is basically plagued by the same ailments: political immaturity, lack of rational industrialization, growing excess of population, and growing deficiency of food. Instead of emphasizing *local* complexities by day-to-day handling of a Greek dilemma or a Palestine deadlock as if each were in a vacuum all its own, our policy would gain effectiveness and support both at home and in the Mediterranean if our decisions were geared to an overall viewpoint and a long-range program.

Our final purpose—peace in a balanced world—requires that everywhere in the Mediterranean there be developed permanently stable economic and political entities. These are not to be “satellites” of the United States in the sense that the puppet regimes of Eastern Europe are creatures of the Kremlin, but independent states whose prosperity and freedom will be their best guarantee of loyalty. (This evidently leaves room for an improved Truman Doctrine and a flourishing State of Israel.) Given the present generally low level of economic health and conscious liberalism in the Mediterranean, Reitzel's goal is clearly

a long way off, but a beginning can be made, and each step in the proper direction will yield dividends in gratitude and increasing stability. Moreover, as the strength of the component Mediterranean parts grows, the danger of a two-way cleavage in the world will correspondingly diminish. Domination of the Eurasian land mass by a single power would inexorably mean a new war. But such domination cannot be attained as long as small independent centers of power exist in the Mediterranean to serve as a barrier against one great power and as a balance between two.

A Princess of the Diaspora

THE HOUSE OF NASI: DONA GRACIA.
By CECIL ROTH. Philadelphia, The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1947. 208 pp. \$3.00.

Reviewed by MAURICE SAMUEL

THE title and subtitle promise us the story of the House of Nasi, and, more particularly, of its first distinguished member, the widow Dona Gracia, aunt of the more famous Joseph Nasi, Duke of Naxos. And we are in fact given that story, together with a fairly vivid picture of the lady, who was a first-class businesswoman in a very big way, public-spirited to a degree, intensely loyal to her people and religion, aristocratic, open-handed, and a bit of a Tartar. "She lived in princely style," Professor Roth tells us. "She knew to what family she belonged, and it does not seem that she was prepared to let others forget it. She was certainly impatient of opposition, at any sight of which her resentment flared up." But—she was the heart and soul of the "underground" which, in the early part of the 16th century, rescued numberless marranos from Spain and Portugal, and brought them to the comparative safety of the Netherlands and the even safer shores of Turkey. She was the prime mover in the first organized boycott of an anti-Semitic state—the city state of Ancona, in 1556—unsuccessful, alas. She was the support of rabbis and scholars; and eighty mendicants sat down regularly at her table in Constantinople.

This is all fascinating material; but unfortunately there is not enough of it—and the fault is not the author's—to constitute a book. We have, actually, only dramatic glimpses of

Dona Gracia, detached incidents; there is not anything like a continuous story or a detailed portrait. To compensate, we have plenty of authentic background, again fascinating material; but we do not get, either, a solid picture of the everyday life of the Jews.

If more were known about Dona Gracia, one might treat her under the aspect of the one great woman *shtadlan* in the high tradition; for it appears that she had the ability, the devotion, and the never-failing class-consciousness of the type. But there is another temptation to the reviewer: to place Dona Gracia side by side with some of the famous non-Jewish women who were her contemporaries or near-contemporaries. Professor Roth mentions, among others, Lucrezia Borgia, Isabella d'Este, and Caterina Sforza. Elsewhere he says: "The Jews of Renaissance Italy had the same tastes and interests as their neighbors." He must surely mean in trivial matters only. It is impossible to imagine a human gulf wider than the one which separates Dona Gracia, as she figures in this book, from—I will not say Cesare Borgia's sister, or the fighting lady of Forli—but even that brilliant patroness of the arts, Isabella d'Este, Marchioness of Mantua. But again the paucity of material makes any real judgment very difficult. I could not help thinking, however, that the occasionally irritating characteristics of the noble Dona Gracia make a fantastic contrast with the genuinely abominable vices of the others. Whenever one begins to dislike the Jews, it is a good idea to take a look at the *goyim*.

PROFESSOR Roth closes his preface by saying: "Any parallels with the conditions of our own day, which may be noticed in this work, are due to the irony of history and not the imagination of the author." Instead of deprecating, he might have pointed up and exploited the parallels. They are not superficial. They have to do with something more than the obvious and eternal refugee aspects of the Diaspora.

The history of the marranos poses a searching question: To what extent was distrust of them "justified" even when their conscious addiction to the old faith was very weak? Is there not a parallel in the Nazi distrust of assimilated Jews? Was there not something in the general Jewish outlook which was fundamentally at variance with the *Weltanschau-*

ung of the Spanish rulers, as it was with that of the Nazis? It is curious to note how Jewish scientists were helpful in discovering the New World for the benefit of Spain; but what Spain's rulers wanted was the gold of the New World without the implications of the new geography. In the same way the Nazis wanted the new science, in which Jews played so prominent a part, without its intellectual and spiritual consequences.

These disjointed observations do not represent an adequate criticism of the book. But, given this material, it hardly seems possible to write otherwise. Perhaps Jewish Diaspora history cannot be written. It has too many frames of reference.

The Ordeal in France

LA PRESSE, LA PROPAGANDE ET L'OPINION PUBLIQUE SOUS L'OCCUPATION. BY JACQUES POLONSKI. Paris, Editions du Centre, 1946. 157 pp. 150 frs.

CONTRIBUTION À L'HISTOIRE DES CAMPS D'INTERNEMENT DANS L'ANTI-FRANCE. BY JOSEPH WEILL. Paris, Editions du Centre, 1946. 230 pp. No price.

DE DRANCY À AUSCHWITZ. BY GEORGES WELLERS. Paris, Editions du Centre, 1946. 231 pp. No price.

LA CONDITION DES JUIFS EN FRANCE SOUS L'OCCUPATION ITALIENNE. BY L. POLIAKOV. Paris, Editions du Centre, 1946. 174 pp. No price.

Reviewed by NORBERT GUTERMAN

IN THE summer of 1943, when it seemed that within a short time no Jews would be left in France, a group of Jewish leaders founded a documentation center in Grenoble, to collect and preserve the records of Nazi crimes. After liberation (in the interval many of the founders had met death) the group, now subsidized by the Joint Distribution Committee, was reorganized in Paris. Its activities now comprise the publication of monographs and collections of documents on specific aspects of Jewish life during the war. The four volumes under review—the first four publications of this group—are abundantly illustrated, distinguished

by competent scholarship, sober presentation, and a lucid style.

JACQUES Polonski's monograph casts much light on both the powers and the limits of modern manipulation of public opinion. To convert the French, who have a good record on racial tolerance, to anti-Semitism, was a difficult problem. The Nazis chose to proceed gradually. When the newspapers resumed publication a few days after the occupation of Paris, they carried statements to the effect that the conqueror would allow full freedom of opinion, and that they would devote themselves as in the past to giving objective information. Needless to say, however, news reports were carefully sifted and doctored for Nazi purposes. But that was not all.

The campaign against the Jews began with seemingly harmless statements intended to bring their existence to public awareness. First by insinuation, then more and more directly, foreign Jews were blamed for France's misfortunes, and the Jews in general were represented as the real power behind the Anglo-Americans and Bolsheviks. Soon there appeared situation-wanted ads inserted by non-Jewish secretaries and Aryan salesmen and governesses; and then other novelties, such as the slogan chosen by a well-known firm of opticians, Lissac Frères: "Lissac is not Isaac, which is a Jewish name par excellence."

As the program of extermination began to take shape, the press campaign increased in violence. In 1940 Marcel Déat in *L'Oeuvre* discreetly ascribed Minister Georges Mandel's effort, on the eve of the defeat, to move the government to Africa to his "latent nomadism," and *Le Temps* explained the obstacles to Germany's expansion eastward by the influence of "political or racial" ideologies. By 1942 the word "Jew" is found in banner headlines: reporters study various aspects of the Jewish "scourge"; illustrated weeklies elaborate on the Jewish menace, etc. Then came a flood of posters giving false statistics about alleged Jewish power, and pictures representing the Jew as a low animal or a pestiferous insect.

When "foreigners" alone were under attack, French public opinion reacted rather apathetically. Mr. Poliakov's book quotes a report dated Jan. 28, 1941, in which Gestapo chief Dr. Kochen wrote: "It seems almost impossible to cultivate among the French an anti-Jewish feeling on an ideological basis; the offer of eco-

conomic benefits would more easily arouse sympathy for the anti-Jewish struggle. The internment of nearly 100,000 foreign Jews living in Paris would provide numerous Frenchmen with an opportunity to lift themselves from the lower to the middle classes."

THE ingenious system recommended by Dr. Kochen was actually applied; and it might have worked more effectively if more Frenchmen had benefited from it and if the machine of destruction once set in motion could have been stopped. But after foreign Jews came the turn of French Jews, and after French Jews came French "Aryans." Signs of resistance to German propaganda began to multiply. The spirit of the Fronde was revived when several "Aryan" students demonstratively donned Jewish armbands with the yellow Star of David to protest against the decree imposing such armbands on the Jews. The national pride of the French was offended; Pomaret, an official of the Vichy Ministry of the Interior, when informed that one of his prefects insisted on deporting a trainload of Jewish children, said in a trembling voice, "*Nous sommes en France quand même* (This is still France after all)," and obtained the release of the victims.

The Germans and collaborationists suffered their greatest fiasco in the attempt to influence the French teachers, who had a solid tradition of militant liberalism. "I know of an old teacher," writes Jean Guéhenno, "grouchy and tender, who was shocked one morning when two pupils wearing the yellow Star of David for the first time entered his classroom. He ordered the class to take their seats as usual, and then without thinking summoned the two little boys to his desk. They obeyed full of apprehension. When they were close to him, he kissed each of them on both cheeks without saying a word." Likewise, the attempt to create a special chair of so-called Jewish studies at the Sorbonne failed ignominiously. The first lecture, in December 1942, provoked a riot; the following lectures were boycotted so completely that most were cancelled for lack of an audience, and the few that did take place never gathered more than three listeners—including the specially appointed observer from the underground.

However, it is an error to assume that the propagandist's primary aim is to gain the intellectual and moral adherence of his audience. The social function of totalitarian propaganda is of a quite different order—its primary objec-

tive is to serve as a herald of violence and a lubricant of the mechanisms of terror. It uses persuasion only as a superficial garb; this propaganda is not a perverted form of argumentation but an intensified form of blackmail, and its main argument is always the threat behind the argument. Propaganda conquers souls by first reducing them to passivity and then involving them in the practices of oppression.

In France, despite the admirable spiritual resistance of the people as a whole, the doctrines of Aryanism were carried out with gruesome efficiency. There were concentration camps run by exclusively French personnel, where the victims were systematically dehumanized by the application of the familiar methods. And it was possible to recruit considerable numbers of Frenchmen who, as camp commandants, stole internees' meager supplies; as sadistic guards, maltreated them; as physicians, prescribed violent exercise for internees stricken with the worst starvation diseases; and, as high officials, consented in the end to send to death factories more than 120,000 Jews, 20,000 of them children. Dr. Weill's book gives us a solidly documented history of these camps from July 1940 to July 1942, and of the heroic efforts developed by various Jewish and non-Jewish relief organizations to ease the lot of the victims.

THE French camps under Vichy were a heritage from the Third Republic. In an article in COMMENTARY (January 1946), Leo Lowenthal observed that "mankind today has so tremendously improved its technology as to render itself largely superfluous." It was to cope with the problem of a "superfluous" mass of people that, long before the war, these French camps were instituted—they were the euphemistically named *camps d'hébergement* ("shelter camps")—for Loyalist refugees from Spain. Later the Daladier government assigned the same dilapidated buildings to the thousands of rounded-up enemy aliens (the majority of them anti-Nazi refugees from Germany), the stateless, and more generally all "suspects." When Pétain took over, he had at his disposal, in unoccupied France alone, 26 camps with a total capacity of 100,000 internees.

In the details of their organization and functioning, the French camps differed from the German: the internees were not made to do exhausting labor, they could receive some help from outside, and they were less brutally treated. The high mortality was due chiefly to

starvation and unspeakable hygienic conditions. But the basic absurdity and injustice, with all their consequences of moral degradation, had been there from the beginning; and extermination, the fate that overtook the vast majority of the internees, was the logical conclusion.

Dr. Weill, who was director of the Union-O.S.E. and medical organizer in the camps, pays high tribute to the work of the relief organizations. Thanks to them, thousands of human beings were saved from certain death for a long time—finally, alas, to be seized, loaded into cattle cars, and sent to Germany. The conclusion Dr. Weill draws from this bitter lesson is well worth meditating.

"A relief action," he writes, "is social only if it is constructive; and it cannot be constructive unless it is integrated in a great political idea. There is no vacuum around a social action. Its purpose originates in a social inadequacy or injustice. Therefore each gesture performed for the purpose of relief must also be an active contribution to the general struggle against that inadequacy or injustice. The internees had to be helped to survive; but above all it was necessary to liberate them. If we had paid more vigilant attention to the conqueror's long-range policy and to the historical laws that determined it, instead of concentrating our efforts on improving camp conditions, we would have grasped from the very beginning the interdependence of the coercive measures and their inevitable conclusion—deportation and collective murder. We could thus have saved many persons whose clear and courageous minds . . . and generous hearts we cruelly miss today."

By July 1942, the job of extermination was taken over by the Germans; the collaborationists were now reduced to the role of bloodhounds. The camps in the southern zone of France were superseded by Drancy, which functioned as a deportation center and reservoir for Jewish victims whose final destination was Auschwitz. The study of this camp by Dr. Georges Wellers, who miraculously survived Drancy, Auschwitz, and Buchenwald, gives the reader, perhaps more successfully than any other book on the subject, a complete insight into the workings of the new type of society that a concentration camp represents.

Drancy had no crematoria or gas chambers, it was only an anteroom to Auschwitz; but in most other respects it resembled the worst German camps. Nothing can surpass the horror of certain of the scenes described in this book—

such as the arrival of 4,000 parentless children aged from 2 to 12, their helpless bewilderment in strange surroundings, the pitiable efforts of the woman internees to tend them, and their final deportation to the Auschwitz gas chambers, after having been searched by French gendarmes, who treated them like the grown-ups.

Of the more than 70,000 persons who passed through Drancy, less than 1,500 have survived. The Nazi fury against the Jews was such that the shipments of human cattle continued on schedule even after the Allied landing in Normandy, despite the lack of material and personnel and the difficulties of transportation. The last shipment—of 1,300 internees, which included 300 parentless children—took place one month before the liberation of Paris.

Among other details, Dr. Wellers supplies convincing evidence as to the role of the collaborationists. It was through their efforts that most of the victims were rounded up. In August 1941, the Germans ordered the Paris police to arrest *all* Jews, and in one morning 5,000 persons were arrested in only two *arrondissements*. On December 12, when the Germans used their own police, they were able to seize only 700 persons. On July 16, 1942, the job was again entrusted to the French police, and the number of victims was 12,000. Dr. Wellers estimates that "without the active aid of the collaborationists, the Germans would have been unable to do even one-quarter of the evil that they had time to do in the four years of occupation with the help of the collaborationists."

The second part of Wellers' book strikingly illustrates how some exceptional individuals managed to preserve their moral integrity—usually at the price of hastening their death. It contains a moving account of the ordeal of René Blum, the ex-premier's brother, director of the Ballets de Monte Carlo, who was deported to Birkenau and probably murdered there.

AFTER the Allied landing in Africa, when all of France was occupied by the Axis, a zone in the southeast fell to the Italians. This Italian episode, related in L. Poliakov's book, is the brightest page in the history of the French Jews during the Second World War. There were fifty thousand Jews in the Italian zone. The Germans, anxious to get hold of new victims, angrily urged the Italians to apply the racial laws, and Laval, eager to prove himself a more reliable collaborator than the Italians, person-

ally urged his prefects to round up Jews. But the Italian military administration invariably cancelled his orders, refusing even to surrender Jews who had illegally crossed from the German to the Italian zone.

The documents from captured files with which Poliakov illustrates his story cast an interesting light on the psychology of the characters involved. At one point, the frustrated Germans pinned high hopes on General Lospinoso, whom the Italians sent to take charge of the Jews in their zone after energetic Nazi representations. To the consternation of the Gestapo observers stationed in Nice, Lospinoso chose as his aide Angelo Donati, a half-Jew, who introduced him to a Father Benoit-Marie, connected with the Resistance movement. (This is the same Father Benoit about whom James Rorty wrote in the December 1946 COMMENTARY.) This French priest asked Lospinoso to carry out his orders with moderation. "Lospinoso then expressed mild surprise at the fact that a Capuchin was interested in Jewish problems and asked him kindly to explain who was the God of the Jews. Father Benoit-Marie reassured him by stating that the God of the Jews was the same as the God of the Christians." Thereupon the Italian commissioner withdrew to a pleasant villa on the Riviera, leaving a committee constituted by the refugees themselves to handle their problems.

ONLY an order from the Duce himself could change the situation. According to Vidau, a high official of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ribbentrop succeeded in persuading Mussolini to issue such an order; but at the last moment a report on the massacres organized by the SS in Poland was submitted to Mussolini, accompanied with a terse note stating that not even the German ally should be permitted to

force Italy to become associated with such crimes. The warning proved effective.

The arrest of a Jew meant the seizure of all his belongings by the captor, and so we are not surprised to read, in a secret report sent by a high Gestapo official to his superior, that he found the Italian administration's attitude "incomprehensible." What particularly shocked the Germans was that the same attitude was displayed by Italians of lower rank; thus Italian officers were seen in the company of Jewish friends, and—horror of horrors—even paying their checks in cafés. Was this the power of a humanistic tradition? Were prestige and high policy involved? Or was it simply because Italy, an economically backward country, has not reached the technological stage at which whole groups of people appear superfluous? Whatever the cause, the Italians were magnificently humane up to the bitter end. After the fall of Mussolini, foreseeing their imminent collapse and the German invasion of their zone, they arranged with Jewish organizations for the shipment of all refugees to North Africa, and concentrated Jews in the seaports to facilitate their transportation.

It was not the Italians' fault that the plan did not materialize and that this happy episode had a tragic ending. According to Donati's version of the circumstances of the Italian surrender, the Italians were to be given a month to reorganize their armies and were to turn them against the Germans on the date of publication of the surrender document, set for October. For reasons that have not yet been divulged, the Allied high command published it several weeks earlier than originally scheduled, on September 8, without previously notifying the Badoglio government. The Jews found themselves in a trap. A few days later the SS got the quarry that had eluded them for a full nine months.

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

STEPHEN SPENDER, the noted British poet and critic, is teaching at Sarah Lawrence College.

DAVID BAUMGARDT is consultant in philosophy at the Library of Congress.

HAL LEHRMAN, author of *Russia's Europe* (1947), has written many political articles for COMMENTARY.

MAURICE SAMUEL's latest book is *Prince of the Ghetto* (just published), a volume on Isaac Loeb Peretz similar in form to Mr. Samuel's famous *The World of Sholom Aleichem* (1943).

NORBERT GUTERMAN's articles, reviews, and translations have appeared in *Partisan Review*, *New Republic*, and other periodicals.